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This Book is Respectfully Dedicated

TO

CAPTN. LORD WM DE LA POER BERESFORD,

A.-D.-C. TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY AND GOVERNOR-GENERAL

H. M's 9TH (QUEEN'S) ROYAL LANCERS,

TO WHICH DISTINGUISHED REGIMENT

THE AUTHOR BELONGED FOR MANY YEARS.

AT THE SIEGE OF DELHI, THE CORPS

STRUCK TERROR TO THE HEARTS OF THE ENEMY,

AND AT THE BATTLE OF AGRA SHOWED HOW

JUSTLY THEY HAD OBTAINED THE

COGNOMEN—

‘Delhi! Ballam-Wallahs!’

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STRAY LEAVES  
FROM  
A MILITARY MAN'S NOTE BOOK,  
CONTAINING  
DESCRIPTIONS OF MEN & THINGS REGIMENTAL  
AT HOME AND ABROAD.

BY  
HENRY HARTIGAN, V.C.,  
LATE SERGEANT, H. M.'s 9TH (QUEEN'S) ROYAL LANCERS.

EDITED BY  
N. T. WALKER,  
LATE 6TH DRAGOON GUARDS (CARABINEERS),  
AND DEDICATED BY PERMISSION  
TO  
CAPT. LORD WM DE LA POER BERESFORD  
H. M.'s 9TH (QUEEN'S) ROYAL LANCERS.  
A.D.C. TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY AND GOVERNOR-GENERAL.

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## PREFACE.

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A FEW words will suffice to introduce the following pages, whose object is to revive the recollections of those who may have actually figured in the scenes depicted, and also furnish a little merriment to those who do not object to while away an hour of *ennui*, in the fashion, it may be, of "laughter holding both its sides," which as the learned say is promotive of health. That same laughter being besides an "outward and visible sign" of amiability, and, provided it be of the genial kind, is like a "soft word that turneth away wrath." So that albeit the writer is travelling on a beaten track, wherein many a wortlier one has catered for the public entertainment, he hopes his attempts will at least be recognized, however humble, as hearty, and his shortcomings excused on that score.

A portion of the tales have already appeared in the columns of the *Indian Daily News*; but with some emendations and many additions, this little volume is presented to the public, in the hope that it may meet as much favor "in line," as the sketches did "in skirmishing."



## E R R A T A.

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- Page 23 line 27 for "Disk" *read* "Dick."  
" 35 , 13 omit the word "how."  
" 104 , 23 for "and" *read* "or."  
" 124 , 4 for "be" *read* "was."  
" 132 , 6 for "them" *read* "him."  
" 143 , 2 for "of" *read* "off."  
" 163 , 24 for "auld" *read* "ould."  
" 171 , 3 & 17 " " "  
" 173 , 15 for "steady for time" *read* "steady for a  
time."  
" 178 , 10, 16 & 17 for "auld" *read* "ould."  
" 206 , 8 for "inunbibus" *read* "nubibus."  
" 215 , 17 for "paid" *read* "hard."  
" 221 , 2 for "judge" *read* "grudge."  
" 228 , 25 for "get" *read* "got."  
" 231 , 12 for "epaulets" *read* "epaulets."  
" *ib.* , 13 for "next" *read* "not."  
" 238 , 21 for "hail sacred day" *read* "hail the  
sacred day."  
" 191 , 5 for "lacitum" *read* "taciturn."



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## JERRY DRISCOLL AND THE GAME EGGS.

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### CHAPTER I.

IN WHICH THE READER IS MADE ACQUAINTED WITH A MILITARY MAN WHO CHERISHED A FANCY FOR "GAME BIRDS"—UNDER DIFFICULTIES.

BEHOLD the *confreres*!—The old lancer with his inevitable cheroot, which he occasionally puffed as he solemnly meditated upon the affairs of state which doubtless agitated his mighty bosom. We were sitting in the verandah of the lancer's quarters where every object, animate and inanimate, from the "ould man" himself, and the "dacent woman that owned him," to the very chairs and tables, spoke of home and domesticity. There were dogs and cats about; singing birds from home trilled shrilly out their evensong from their gilded cages; a parrot was calling the cook and banning the doctor with infinite gusto; the fowls "fell in" to be fed before they went to roost, and after having expatiated upon the merits of Dorkings and

Chittagongs and Japanese, and who knows what, the old fellqw fairly burst out into raptures as he pointed out the beauties of some splendid game fowls he had “reared himself” (and give him luck of the task), and which he said were infinitely “shupayriur” to any kind of fowl whatsoever, let any one say to the contrary. *He* did not care for the breeds that other people raved about—give him the *rale thing itself!*

“Look at that chap,” said he—pointing to a perfect gem of a bright black-brown colour, picking his steps as daintily as a boarding-school miss across the verandah.—“Look at that chap; he’s slim and iligant and all that; but look at his coat, man! There’s the sign of breed and pluck! That fellow would fight till he’d drop; what signifies them other trash compared with *that* brood. “Tell me,” he continued with some anxiety depicted in his rubicund countenance, “had ye ever a Driskill (Driscoll) in the regiment?”

“Of course, we had,” said I; “did you ever hear of a regiment that hadn’t? Be gorra there was a whole troop of Driscolls, in the Black Horse.”

“Well now,” said the old man, “the sorra the regiment yet I iver seen but there was Drishkills in id! Mind you, I don’t say they were the proper Drishkills, but they called themselves the rale material, and some av them were nothin’ more nor

less than a soundin' brass and a tinklin' cymbal. Them birds, now," he continued, " put me in mind of one of them, and if you want to hear how a poor slip of a boy would neglect everything and go as far as his tether would let him after pigeons, *and* game fowls, *and* monkeys *and* dogs and cats, *and* anything to pet or tame, he was the man ! and I'll tell ye about him. Take another weed now, and as much as cover the bottom of yer glass. Katherine, me deer, put the brandy this way, and you'll hear the story of Jerry Drishkill !" [The mandates were cheerfully obeyed, and in his most sententious style the old man commenced his story.]

" We had," said he, " as most regiments have, a recruiting party in Charles Street, Westminster. . . They were very successful in sending us recruits, and some as fine young fellows as ever took a shilling were ' listed, tested, sworn and a' from that locality. But, oh dear ! did'nt we get a bad bargain or two among them ! A London Irishman or a London Scotchman is as bad, I tell ye, and worse than a West Indian from Greenock or Dundee ! They were, comparatively, bad soldiers ; they were always shamming sick—poultice-eaters we used to call them—getting into petty scrapes and generally disagreeable to themselves, their comrades, and the whole troop. You know the kind of men I mean ; they are not to be done without ; every regiment

has them ; for you know, Katherine, me deer" (here he looked tenderly at 'the mistress,' and gently edged the decanter towards himself), "there must be a contrast you know, for where there is no contrast there can be no beauty" (and here his look said as plainly as his tongue could, *and you're a beauty—that's what you are*). "Well, we had three or four in the regiment ; they were either in hospital, in the cells, or in the dry-room ; and even they were bad in kind. Some of them would rob a church ; others, again, would cease their picking and stealing *in barracks*, but let them once get out on the long chain, all was fish that came to their net ! We could have dispensed with the best of them, but they were necessary evils and were tolerated accordingly. One of them—this Drishkill I spoke of, was the best of the lot, and bad was *his* best. He was about the size of two pen'-north of bad copper ; an ugly, dirty, shambling little wretch ; but he was civil, obliging, willing to work, and yet by some fatality, which you must have seen exhibited thousands of times, he soiled his traps as fast as he cleaned them. With regard to the laws of *meum* and *tuum*, he had a kind of honor among his comrades in the barrack-room. *Their* property was safe ; but let parade, mounted or dismounted, be dismissed, and Jerry Drishkill was off, and not a pigeon-house, fowl-roost or dog-kennel

within miles of the barracks, but he would lay under contribution without mercy, and no questions asked ; and he generally was successful in these marauding expeditions, and returned laden with the spoils of his bow and spear. Pigeons, monkeys, dogs, and game fowl—for Jerry had a soul above anything that wasn't of the best, and many a narrow squeak he had getting away from the natives, who vainly endeavoured to catch him. Jerry ran like a deer, and was a 'master of fence' in the way of dodging his pursuers. He gave his pets freely to any one who asked them ; but he had so many, and spent so much of his time in looking after them, that he neglected his duty ; was frequently reported for being slovenly on parade, and was often brought before the captain of his troop, who, thinking that there was some good in the fellow, dealt very leniently with him ; and, on one particular day, after Jerry had been rewarded with three days' drill for being in a condition on parade, which the troop sergeant-major called 'scrapeable,' the captain called the sergeant of Jerry's squad and said " :—

" Sergeant, I wish you would get some one to take Driscoll in hand and make a soldier of him."

" Is it Drishkill, sur ? " said the sergeant.

" Just so," said the captain.

" Well sur," said the sergeant, " as to makin' a soger of him, I don't think it's to be done by any

manner of manes. But if it *is* to be done, there's only one man in the troop can do it!"

"Who's the man?" queried the captain.

"Corporal Hennessy, sur," said the sergeant.

"Send for him" said the captain; and presently the corporal made his appearance, stood at attention, and saluted his officer.

"Corporal," said the captain, "you have been recommended to me as the only man in the troop able to perform a duty which I wish performed, and I should very much like you to undertake it."

The corporal looked a little puzzled, but after some shuffling and blushing, he said "captain, it's myself would be proud to sarve you. Only say what you want done, and lave it to me to do it! For though I say it that should not, the——beg pardon sir,—sorra man stands betuxt the Sandheads an' the Kyber Pass will do more to sarve you!"

"Thanks, Hennessy," said the captain, "I know you would serve me; but the duty I require to be done is not the most agreeable, and I don't think you'd like it on account of the nature of the work."

"Oh thin, sir"! said Hennessy, "I'm so willin' to do anything to obleege you, that the harder the job the better I'd like it!"

"Well," said the captain, "I want you to take charge of Driscoll and make a soldier of him! There, the murder's out!"

The corporal said no word ; he looked at the captain to see by the expression of his face whether he was what he called ‘takin’ a rise out of him.’

But no ; the captain’s face was set and determined ; and the corporal knew he was not joking with him—and still he made no sign.

“Well Hennessy,” said the captain, at length, “what say you ? If you have any objection to doing what I ask, why, I won’t press you ; but I thought you would be willing to assist a countryman of ours.”

“Oh ! thin !” burst out the corporal, “countryman is id ? The—beg pardon sur—sure he’s no countryman of ayther your’s or mine, the hivins forbid ; an’ it’s not a nice fatigue you put me on. Be gorra, sur, I’d rather break in all the young horses in the troop. But I’ll do it, sur, only I would like you to give me my orders forinst the man himself.”

“Certainly,” said the captain, “send for Driscoll.”

Driscoll soon made his appearance, and was addressed by the captain to the effect that he, Driscoll, was to be handed over to the tender mercies of corporal Hennessy, who was ‘him to have and to hold, for better or worse,’ until he was made a soldier of. And the captain with a gravity becoming his years and position, did so lecture and ‘jobate’ poor Driscoll, that, as the corporal said afterwards, ‘a dog wouldn’t pick a bone of him,’ and finally wound up by confiding him to the corporal’s care. “He will draw your pay,

you know," said the captain ; " you are to obey him in all respects ; he will set you up in kit ; and so soon as he reports to me that your kit is complete, and that you are out of debt, you will be allowed to spend your own money, but not before."

" Av ye plase, sur," said the corporal " he must get rid of all his pets."

" Oh dear ! yes," said the captain.

" An' his pigeons—may bad luck fly away wid them ! "

" Certainly,—grinning.

" An' his dogs ? "

" Of course."

" An' his cocks and *hins*, captain ? "

" Undoubtedly, corporal."

" An' the goat an' the *bundera* ? "

" Every thing, corporal ! "

" You hear, Driscoll ? "

Driscoll could stand this no longer. His pigeons were to be flown away with, his dogs to be turned loose, his fowls disposed of summarily ; he bore all these inflictions like a Spartan ! But when they spoke of the goat and the monkey, he felt—poor fellow,—that there was not much left to live for.

" Captain," said Jerry " an' God spare ye to yer wife an' childer (the captain was a bachelor), *don't* take away the monkey an' the goat ! I'm tachin' them tricks the last six months, an' the pair o' them

can do anything but spake. Don't now; lave me them ! An' whisper, sur," said Jerry, "av ye seen that ould goat stannin' on his kind legs beggin' an' shakin his two fore paws ! *Bad luck to me but he's the picter av—well—I was goin' to say the rigimental sarjin-major, but I won't—so he is !*" Here the captain's gravity gave way, and he hurriedly said—" Well, if the corporal finds you are getting on well, I dare say he will allow you to keep a pet. I leave every thing in his hands. Now, sir, right-about-face, to your horse, quick march !" and Jerry was hunted off.

After stables Jerry's cot was moved next to the corporal's. His kit was inspected and the deficiencies made good, and for the first time since he had been a recruit, Mr. Jerry found himself with a complete kit! The dogs, fowls, pigeons, &c., disappeared as if by magic, and as they brought a round sum in price, so far as regarded his financial affairs Jerry was in clover. He took to his work, too, apparently with all his small capabilities, and laughed and danced and sang in the barrack room to the great amusement of the residents, and to the entire satisfaction of Corporal Hennessy hereinbefore mentioned ; who declared by all the saints in the calendar that there was stuff in the boy yet ; he had always thought so, and it was only a little stirring up he wanted. " I get all the credit for the change," said the old man, " but the boy has good in him, and

is willing to work. He will make a good soldier yet." "I knew," he said to Jerry, "a fine young fellow once ; he was very wild, but I tamed him and made a soldier of him ; he was promoted, and would have had a commission but that he was kilt in action. Do you do the same as that young fellow did, and be this book (and here he hit the butt of his pistol) you'll be promoted yourself."

"Is it me," said Driscoll ; "Aye faith" ! said the corporal ; "why not?"

"Arrah," man, I have been in great trouble!"

"That's soon forgotten. You have the ball at your feet ; keep it rowlin ; you have your *fut* on the first step of the ladder, get to the top of it, me buck ! and if ye don't, it won't be Hennessy's fault."

But woe is me ! About ten days afterwards the unfortunate corporal rushed into the captain's quarters in a state of the most profound bewilderment ! Driscoll had given him the double and relapsed ! "Oh ! captain," said the old fellow, "I'm shuk !"

"What's the matter" enquired the captain.

"Me heart is broke" said Barney. "To do such a thing after being in *my* hands ! Stop his promotion, sur ! The blaggard ! Who would have thought it !" And here the old fellow paused breathless.

This gave the captain time to question the corporal as to what the matter really was ; and it was

ascertained from the corporal's broken ejaculations that some hen was dead, some eggs smashed, some kit, hen, box, eggs, hopes of promotion, and top of the ladder had all gone flying. And along with that all hopes of one of *his* teaching getting promotion. The captain at first laboured under the impression that Hennessy was drunk, and had sent for the troop sergeant-major, who came 'hot-foot'.

"Can you explain what's the matter with this man," asked the captain.

"I can, sir, I think. Hennessy's white-haired boy, Driscoll, has had a relapse!"

"That's all?"

"All, sir?" groaned Hennessy; "not half! See, now, the beautiful new kit. 12 pair av bran new drill overalls, every one of them made by Jim-boy; they would have lasted till doomsday: the first quality, sur! An' the six jackids ye admired yerself, captain!"

"Yes, yes," interrupted the captain; "let the sergeant-major explain." "To be sure, sur. I am an old fool! I had such faith in that boy!"

"It seems, sir," said the sergeant-major "that Driscoll has been pronounced perfect by Hennessy."

"And so he was, sur," broke in Hennessy. "He got off guard last guard-mounting for being clane; didn't I put 22 rupees in the bank for him? didn't"—

"Yes—yes ; we know all that, don't interrupt the sergeant-major" said the captain "or I shall have to send you to your barrack-room"

"Give me lave for the day, sur ; me heart-strings is tore ! "

"Very well;" and off went Hennessy muttering "12 trousers—all burnt ; don't promote the blaggard. "I killed the *hin* and smashed the eggs ! 6 jackids ! bad luck to him ! "

Hennessy gone, the sergeant-major told his story. It appeared that after Driscoll had arrived at the *ultima thule* of his fame and been pronounced perfect, his cot had been moved to the verandah away from the corporal. Everything seemed well ; the captain had seen his kit, and all his appointments and belongings were in as high a state of cleanliness and perfection as hard rubbing could make them. "When I went round the troop the other day" said the sergeant-major, "poor Hennessy was in his glory."

"What do you think of my boy now ?" asked Hennessy.

"Does you great credit," said I, "and Driscoll should be thankful to you."

"So he is, major ! Divil a better boy in the regiment."

"I was great trouble to him," said Driscoll slyly.

"No trouble in life" said Hennessy—walking off in great glee. "But this morning," continued the

sergeant-major, "when the Roman Catholics came from church, Driscoll gave his belts to McSweeny to take to the bungalow, and started off to the bazar. McSweeny took the belts to Driscoll's bed, all round which there was a pervading smell of cloth burning. In hanging up the belts, McSweeny happened to put his hand on the bed, when behold the entire apparatus came down ! The bed was one mass of fire but soon extinguished by the men, and on examination it was discovered that the whole of Driscoll's kit had been rolled up in the bedding, and there was not a single article but bore *some* marks of the fiery ordeal through which it had passed."

"Even the hoof-pick ?" said the captain, laughing.

"I am not sure of *that*, sir ; but the clothing is all gone any how. What should have been in the box was in the bed, and is tee-totally destroyed."

"But what about the hens and eggs of which Hennessy is raving ?"

"Well, sir," said the sergeant-major, "I'll tell you. When I saw the state the kit was in, I looked round me for Driscoll's box. I found it in a corner—the lid kept open by a lump of a brick. Here it is, I said to Hennessy. Hennessy made one spring and opened the lid, and to his utter consternation he found"—

"What ?" asked the captain.

"Be gorra, sir," said the sergeant-major, "*he found a hen sitting on thirteen eggs !*"

"And what did he do?"

"Why, sir, he wrung the hen's neck, and smashed the eggs into flitters!"

"Whereupon officer and non-commissioned officer, laughed as hearty a laugh as had echoed under the roof for many a long day.

"Well," said the captain wiping his eyes, "what about Driscoll?"

"He made his appearance shortly after, sir; was very much astonished at the state of his bed and traps; but it was evident *his heart was in the box*. He saw the lid was closed; he rushed to it, and raised it, but suddenly dropped it as if it had stung him, and staggered up against the wall, the picture of misery and desolation. He clasped his hands in bitter agony, and screamed rather than spoke. "Thirteen of them gone! all game eggs—me darlin' of a colour—black-red! Ten cocks would have come out, devil a lie in it! Now they're gone, *and I tuk three weeks to stale them!* Oh! jewels, jewels—he said looking at the *debris* in the veranda, there ye are."

"And here's your kit" said I.

"To the devil I pitch the kit" said Jerry—"I can get another kit, but wherever will I get another thirteen eggs like them to stale! Me heart is broke entirely!"

I asked him how his bed came to take fire, and he told me that he had pushed his pipe in the fold of his rug when he went on parade

(a common practice) and *that* accounted for the mischief.

"What did you do with him?" asked the captain.

"Put him in the guard-room, sir!"

"Serve him right," said the captain "he must pay for a new kit; and I don't think the promotion Hennessy was afraid of his getting will come near him this time!"

"I hope not, sir; a great sell for Hennessy, sir!"

"Yes; what does he say about the fellow now?"

"Shakes his old head, sir, *and thanks God he's not Irish!*"

"Take care of Hennessy," said the captain. "he's worth his weight in gold, if it's only for the laugh he has given us to-day!"

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## THE COURSE OF TRUE LOVE NEVER DID RUN SMOOTH.

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### CHAPTER II.

SHOWING HOW TRUE IT IS THAT “THE COURSE OF TRUE LOVE NEVER *DOES* RUN SMOOTH”

WE had been ‘prating and talking,’ as the phrase goes, *ad infinitum* about soldiers old and young, as the following pages will show, when the present writer bethought himself of enquiring of his *confrere*, the old lancer, whether or no there was no legend in his regiment “in his hot youth when the fourth Bill was King,” touching and concerning the gentler sex, who shared the woes and joys of the men we will endeavour to describe ?

“ Oh, then, ! ” said the old man, “ faith and there was many a story extant in my day, and I believe in yours too, of both wife and daughter which would astonish a stranger. I heard of a dacent woman from Clogheen *beyant*, who would get her husband ready for guard, while he, wet soul as he was, was blowing the froth off Mary Duffy’s porter, and increasing the rubicundity of a nose already like Bardolph’s !

I remember many and many—and so do you, too—who had to slave and toil like beasts of burden more than human beings—to make ends meet for themselves and families; who were always clean and tidy, and kept their children—and ‘above’ knows there were always bushels of *them* about any how—ditto, and never was a man, or woman ayther, dare say black was the white of their eye! Some of the “old hands” were very rough and ready, considered so to be in *my* time. What they would be thought *now* I really cannot say; but it is my opinion, that if education has made great advances, and that every matter in the service has been, and is, improving, I don’t think there has been much improvement made in the then called science of “chaffing,” in which some of the ladies to whom I alluded were passed professors, and qualified to take their stand in the front rank of the *alumni* against all comers. And some of them, in addition to their wonderful performances which went under various denominations from ‘chin-music’ to ‘slack-jaw,’ possessed in no mean degree the powerful *argumentum ad knock-im-down-um!* Just fancy a little woman from Kildare (with the blue sky over it) lending a cockney recruit such a ‘lounder on the ear,’ as shook him from his perpendicular, and raised a singin’ in his head such as *Orphayus nivir* experienced! And he was a smart fellow

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enough! And I have seen, when there was a row in the canteen at home, and pewter pots and tin quarts and pints were describing circles in the air, a stalwart dame elbow her way among a crowd of jostling, pushing, half-t tipsy troopers, sail deliberately up to her ‘lord and master,’ march him off bodily, to the immense amusement of the admiring onlookers; to her own supreme satisfaction, and to the dire discomfiture of the spouse who (not unlikely) had been treating his audience to a domestic history of how (like Sergeant Bagnet), ‘discipline should be maintained.’ How many scrapes these wives (God bless them) kept their thoughtless husbands out of! How many mines to wheedle them out of quarts of beer, or half-pints of whiskey, have they countermined, and hoisted the engineer on his own petard! Patient, hard-working (at home at least, to such an extent as is not known out of barracks), night and day they knew nothing but unceasing labor, lightened only by their husbands’ assistance, or that of some of the good-natured fellows of the squad or troop. From town to town they marched, always without their husbands—leaving one station where they had toiled for a year to a different town where they had to toil again for another year. Washing, scrubbing, polishing; plenty of work and little for working; children born to them, boys and girls to be clothed

and fed somehow—and educated. The boys growing up were easily disposed of by being enlisted *as* boys—that is, not reckoning their service until they attained 18), and provided for in the band or in the ranks as their tastes disposed. But the girls were a different matter. The old régimé was productive of some extraordinary specimens of the genus “school mistress,” and happy was the regiment who gained a prize in *that* lottery. Without special qualifications for the duty, the dominie in petticoats was, in those days, as a rule, the wife of some non-commissioned officer, and they started the business on the least amount of capital—enjoyed the position—the quarters, the allowance—and the dignity which was the concomitant result with all the *insouicance* imaginable ; but whether they rendered a *quid pro quo* for the privileges and immunities they enjoyed, this deponent sayeth not. *I'm afraid—not,*” said the old fellow, scraping his chin in a ruminative manner, “I am afraid—not ; the poor children, I mean the girls, weren't put out, and their small minds were not greatly exercised by the amount of instruction received. An hour of reading and an hour writing, and an hour stitching, if I remember rightly, was the daily curriculum of school tasks ; and as the girls grew up and were able to assist their mothers in their work, I am afraid the school was neglected, a fact, which unless in very flagrant cases, (and

which often involved some personal acrimonious feeling) was seldom brought to notice. Not a few of the girls in the regiment, particularly the "nice-looking" ones, were taken by the ladies of the regiment, some into their own houses, and some into the houses of their friends, and put in the way of being upper servants, after which they were married off to their own inclination as befits all decent girls. Some of them married in the regiment; non-commissioned officers as a rule, and great grandson's—and even a generation farther back for aught I know, or can depose to the contrary—could recite the regimental traditions of their grandsires' fame in the dark ages. "One girl," said the old fellow, "I remember well. She was the daughter of an officer's servant, and was handsome enough for a duchess. When she was young she was a stunted, great-eyed brunette, with a profusion of dark-brown hair eternally in tangles about her face, and through the meshes of which the eyes used to sparkle so mischievously and archly, as to light the entire countenance up with a wonderful attraction. Lissome as a fairy, she used to dart about hither and thither at her own sweet will; knew every man in the regiment, and in her own troop was spoilt by the men, from the troop sergeant-major down to the last-joined 'Mick' (as we used to call the recruits). She never presumed;

her boldness was the boldness of innocence that knew no evil ; and in her presence the rudest of the rough lot among whom she constantly moved were stilled, quiet and respectful. Irrespective of the individual fascination which this girl possessed, the charm that always accompanies youth and makes it beautiful exceedingly, hung about her in an extraordinary degree. A young corporal—the youngest probably that had ever worn a chevron in the corps—had this madcap for a pupil, after school-hours, an hour or so at night. He was well educated himself, and, with the rest, was fascinated by Miss Rachael's little coquetties. And she was an apt scholar ; what “the mistress” couldn't *coax* her to learn, the corporal with his still voice used to contrive to make it a labour of love for the child ; and his “well done, Rachael—you'll be teaching *me* presently,” used to bring the tears to the girl's bright eyes, and her breath come short and quick, while her whole face would flush with delight at being praised by *him*, and shame at being praised before so many who added their little mites of encouragement. The nameless vulgarities which had surrounded her speech began to disappear, and she was becoming a staid young damsel compared to what she had been, when she attracted the attention of the wife of the captain of her father's troop. Herself quite a young lady, she took a fancy to Rachael, and after some

little time made a proposal to the mother that Rachael should go to her house and be there, under her own eye, inducted into all the mysteries of domestic usefulness. This proposal was assented to, and Miss went off to her new home, attended by the good wishes of the entire regiment, and by more than the good-wishes of the troop which she used to call “ours.” So the men saw her no more for a time ; the captain had his long leave ; his family had been on the Continent for a time ; *he* returned to his duty, *they* to the country-seat : and when, a couple of years afterwards, Miss Rachael made her appearance one fine day in the barracks on a visit to her mother (she came in the carriage, no less) no small wonder was expressed at the change which had taken place. Culture, association, natural taste, and, above all, youth, had done so much for her ! She had the step of an empress, and the gestures befitting such a dignity. The eye, dark and sparkling as of yore, shone with a different light—and had yet a lurking devil in it “that played at bo-peep there in spite of her.” No tangles of hair now to obscure the bright glory of her laughing face ; and, as, perfectly and neatly dressed as became her station, she swam into the room and ran into the arms of her mother, she was unanimously there and then honoured with the *cobriquet*—which clung to her while she remained in

it—"the darlin' av the rigiment!" She had forgotten no one; the young hands (who had never seen her before) regarded her with admiring awe; and after her own personal enquiries had been answered, and the younger brothers and sisters petted and had their little presents given them (there was a stranger among *them*, too, whom she had never before seen), she chatted with the old men who had been in the room with her when she was "a bit of a chit." [You see, my friends, when a room is broken up on a march approaching, how the old hands get together in the next station, and *then* you find out where the good woman really is. For sixteen years I have known the same squad at home with the same mess-woman in fifteen different stations. But these were the good days!] .

She enquired for men who were on guard or other duty, and whose names she remembered with the tenacious memory of childhood, who had done her some kindness in the long ago; flitted about here and there; gave old Dick Wright a light for his pipe, and generally made a sunshine in a shady place! But when she extracted from some wonderful receptacle in her dress a small case containing a meerschaum pipe, and presented it to Dick as a *souvenir* of old acquaintance, "all the way from Paris" she had brought it she said, why then, a happier man than old Disk wasn't within the four walls of the barracks!

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"Musha, then!" said the old fellow—"ye didn't forget me, Rachael?"

"Ah Dick," said the girl, "it is not so easy to forget. Many a time I would have given my ears to be back in the old troop-room, and among all my old friends; to have a scamper round the stables, and tumble the litter and the hay about, and have you chasing me with the broom when you were on stable-guard—you remember?"

"Deed, an' I do remember; ye wor a great imp entirely. But sure ye wor nivir very mischievous, but only racketty—then—you have forgotten *that*—to look at you, any how!"

"I'm afraid not, Dick," she said, "I could tuck up this dress (and she daintily held it up so as to show the dandiest little foot in the world), and have a race round the young-horse stables with you this minute! I dearly love a scamper, and I'm very dull, Dick, sometimes. I would wish to be with mother and the children, but"—

"Rachael," said Dick, "you don't ask for Hinch?" (This was the name of her corporal-instructor).

At the hearing of which question Miss Rachael became very much embarrassed; and had a heightened colour in her cheek, and was apparently deeply engaged in adjusting plaits and frills, and coaxing refractory folds in her dress, which would

not come right somehow, and was looking everywhere but at the man who had asked the question.

"Dy'e hear me?" asked Dick again.

"Oh yes, Dick, I hear you. He's a sergeant now, isn't he?"

"Faith and he is," said Dick "and a dasher! an' he'll soon be a sergeant-major, good luck to him! But how do *you* know he's a sergeant?"

"Sure the man who brings the order book to the house told me."

"What man?" asked Dick.

"The corporal in the orderly room brings it some days; some days the orderly."

"Did he tell you of his own accord, the puppy?" asked Dick.

No, indeed!" she said "I asked him about sergeant Hinch."

"Well, well!" said Dick, "women is quare; ye axed a stranger, and ye wouldn't ax *me* that knew ye before ye wor born, child. Sure didn't I run for the docthor."

As well as she could she repressed the laughter in which she was inclined to indulge, and still with a heightened colour and with a diffidence and hesitation which he had never seen in her before, she sat down on the old man's bed, which was strewn with "clanin traps," and Dick went on—

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"Yes ; he has been away from the troop a year and a half ; he comes sometimes to see," and here he glanced at the table, where the mother was selecting articles from a great wicker basket—ironing them and putting them nicely away, "yer mother and me, and some of the old hands in the troop. When he's orderly sergeant he comes round with the orderly officer, you know."—

"Yes, yes, I know—*Why does he come Dick?*"

There was bright eagerness in her eyes as she asked.

"Well," said Dick, looking at Miss Rachael in a most provoking way, and enjoying her confusion, which was most becoming, "av ye ax my opinion I'd say he came because he couldn't help it ; it's a part of his duty, ye know ; but I rather think he likes it. He always has a chat with the mother."

"Does he ever"—here she broke off short, and the tucks were more rebellious than ever.

"Oh yes, indeed, he does, *axes for you every time I see him*," said Dick, concluding the sentence she had vainly endeavoured to finish.

She burst in—"Dick, now I didn't."

"I know ye didn't," coolly said Dick, as he opened the case and looked at the meerschaum, "but sure I know what you intended to ax all the same. Go, child, yer mother will be wonderin' what we're pratin' about!"

And with a smile and a nod he dismissed her.

Soon her father came in ; he had been riding an officer's charger in the afternoon, as was the custom in those degenerate days, and was delighted with his daughter, who coaxed and petted him to his heart's content. And, "at the heel of the hunt," as Dick Wright said, who should make his appearance but Sergeant Hinch. Quite accidentally of course—and there was great chatting, until (much too soon, poor Rachael thought) it was time for her to go. The carriage was at the hotel ; she would walk there.

Hinch could go with her ; her father had stables to attend—her mother was busy, and he, Hinch, would walk with her to the hotel—"if she wasn't too proud?"

This finished Rachael ; *she* wasn't, but *he* (Hinch) had stables to attend, also, hadn't he ?

Oh dear no ; nothing of the kind ; he had leave (accidentally of course), and after effusive leave-takings and promises to come again soon, and much shouting and screaming among the small fry, the couple walked off to the hotel. And old Dick watched them across the barrack-yard. Where every now and again Rachael had to stop, and recognise and greet some friend young or old ; and Hinch swung his silver-mounted whip impatiently, and buttoned and unbuttoned his gloves, and twisted his moustache ;

and thought (did Dick) what ‘an iligant pair they’d be’! Rachael’s mother was watching them too, and as they passed out the gate, she turned and met Dick’s eye, which was eagerly fixed on her’s. There was a bright softness on the old woman’s face that strangely reminded Dick of the daughter. Dick nodded in the direction of the gate, but said no word.

“Yes,” at length said the mother, answering Dick’s nod and look, “yes ; I suppose so. He’s a good man, Dick ?”

“Divil recave the better. He’s changed places wid *her* now.”

“How’s that ?” asked the mother.

“He’s *gettin’* his lesson now instead av *givin’* it,” said Dick ; “he seems to take to his larnin’ kindly from the young mistress, *an’ she won’t be hard on him*, I think.”

“Is there anything in it, Dick ?”

“Be gorra there is,” said Dick, whistling and getting ready for stables ; “everything in id but the axin’; *an’ I think that will be over before night*. I’ll bring ye a can of water on the head of id !” And so saying, Dick swung off to the pump, filled his can, carried it up, set it in its accustomed place, took his stable bag, and went over against the fire where “the mistress” was sitting, to light his pipe. “The mistress” was in a brown study, and well Dick knew what the good woman was thinking

of, so he lighted his pipe, and went to stables saying not a syllable, but, like the Highlandman's crow, or that historical parrot which (either of them) is quite as celebrated as Macaulay's New Zealander, and infinitely more ancient, thinking a great deal—like poor Rachael's mother.

Meanwhile the pair (Rachael and Hinch), sauntered to the hotel, and there was a good deal of loitering and lingering by the way—which, be sure, was not the shortest—the result, of course, of another accident. And there was more lingering there; and a great to do about the coachman (another soldier), who had been ‘seeing his friends’; and very general confusion among all parties, the end of which was that Rachael drove off in a very becoming state of flush, “with a smile on her lip, and a tear in her eye,” which was all gladness ; and Hinch swaggered back to his quarters as “happy as Larry,” though in what that happiness consisted he could scarcely have explained himself, but he *knew*—for had she not told him? that—“well” ejaculated the old fellow, as he came to this part of his recital—“it’s the old story ; get out—” this to his favourite cat which had located herself on his chair ; “sure thim women is the devil for makin’ fools av us! I’ll have another weed ! ” “Well, sir,” he continued, “Hinch told the old people, who were quite agreeable. The prospect was fair for the girl ; the man was on the high road

to promotion ; nothing could interfere with that but misconduct, and *that*, with him, was out of the question; and they thought their daughter well off to get such a husband ; and, by-and-bye, Rachael was duly acquainted with the consent of her parents to the projected alliance.

But there was a lion in the path ! Such an event as a soldier, unless on duty, coming about a married officer's quarters, was a thing forbidden in these days. I mean *some* officers ; others didn't care if you marched the troop down, and they (and their wives) would have enjoyed the thing immensely. But the more gorgonic the lady, the stricter the order. We had the wife of a colonel, sir, who was as ugly as sin ; and who couldn't bear to be looked upon by a private dragoon or non-commissioned officer, unless some she knew from long acquaintance, for she was an old stager. Now, this lady had a fancy (or her husband, who knows ?) for pretty handmaidens, and no one, save one answering to that description, found rest for the sole of her foot in that ark in which the colonel's lady played the part of Mrs. Noah. They must be trim, and natty, and nice ; and she always contrived that her fancy (or her husband's, as aforesaid, there is really no telling, you know) should be gratified. The handmaidens *were* invariably of the description given ; but alas for human nature ! if *she* had fancies, the girls had fan-

cies too, and one after another they were all snapped up, and not having the fear of courts-martial, cells, guard-room or wiggings before their eyes ; they listened to the voices of charmers, in the shape of ‘ bould sojer boys’ and, left her. Half a dozen of them were in the regiment ; some married with leave; some without; some to non-commissioned officers, others to privates ; but all well-doing and a credit to themselves and to the regiment, at which she chafed exceedingly. So she took to the opposite extreme, and had “ ugly helps,” as ugly as, Dick Swiveller said, “ you could see any where out of a show for a penny,” which did not please the colonel at all ; and at the time of which I am writing, this lady was about to enter into arrangements which would place her in possession of a jewel of a hand-maiden—to be “ a thing of beauty and a joy for ever” in that happy domestic establishment which called her mistress. And this gem was—Rachael. She had cast her eyes on that maiden who had found favour in her sight ; her good opinion strengthened by the praise of her young mistress (who really did not wish to part with her, but you see a colonel’s lady in a regiment does not often set her mind on anything she can’t get), and of course, as Mrs. Colonel remarked, with a toss of her head, and a spiteful pinch at her nose (which was in colour *gules*, charged with veins *azure*) the girl couldn’t do better ; and

of course she would be glad to come. Rachael was sent for.

"Rachael," said her mistress, "the colonel's lady wishes you to go to her. There is no family" (here Mrs. Colonel sniffed, whether at the quiet rub she was receiving, or the sour grapes, is unknown) "very little work, and more wages—

"Oh ! ma'am !" said poor Rachael bursting into tears, "please don't send me away ; I am very happy; think of the children, ma'am" (as indeed she did, for as many of them as could get near her were swarming about the girl). "I don't want more wages ; I will work for you for nothing; please please don't send me away ; I never asked to go—I *cannot* go indeed."

"Um," said Mrs. Colonel (thinking to herself, stiffnecked—spoiled—I'll see what her mother says ; then aloud) "no doubt, a change. But you must change some time?"

"When I wish," quietly said Rachael ; "*at present* I do not wish to change. I have always been happy here ; there has always been happiness wherever my mistress has been."

"There is happiness elsewhere," said the colonel's lady.

"Yes, ma'am;" said Rachael looking at the old gorgon very steadily, "but why should I seek happiness *there* (she didn't say where, but she

meant the colonel's quarters) when it springs up all round me *here?*"

"Stuff and nonsense," croaked the old lady, "young folks these days don't know what's good for them. I'll see your mother ; you can go."

And poor Rachael was relegated to her own domain in a terrible state of mind. She knew very well that if the colonel's lady went to her mother, she would persuade, almost command, her to let her go ; and she knew enough of that high-souled lady personally and by report, to make up her mind that the bed she had to sleep on when she left the captain's for the colonel's house, would not be one of roses. But what could the girl do ? She had the fear of her mother before her eyes ; Hinch ! ah !—but then what could *he* do ? He, too, was in the toils ; and in vain seeking for a light in the clouds which seemed surrounding her ; poor Rachael gave up in despair, and thinking she was the hardest-used, most unfortunate girl in all the world, she sobbed herself to sleep—what she had not done since she was a little child—for she, poor girl, had been very happy.

However, our friend Gorgon triumphed. Rachael's mother thought it a great chance for her girl, "and the colonel's lady you know !" the poor woman said. Hinch was furious, but he was

powerless ; he knew the *ukase* that had gone forth as to soldiers going about the quarters ; no more walks, or talks in that direction ; Rachael might as well be in the Bastille ! He might get an odd glimpse of his sweetheart now and again, but, as he ruefully remarked, “*that was his share of it.*”

The end of it was that Rachael went ; that she was miserable ; that she urged her mother, on Sundays, to be taken away from there ; that she could see Hinch when the troops went past the window in watering order or to a field day ; that he sometimes came to the house on duty, but she dare not open the door to his well-known single knock (for wasn’t there a boy in livery to do that?). And she heard him come and go, and had never a word with him. That he, Hinch, took to writing notes, which Dick Wright took to Nelly Barry, the colonel’s servant’s wife, who was from “the one town,” and coaxed her to give poor Rachael. That Rachael used to answer the notes ; that Hinch found out what time the colonel dined *en famille* (at which liour, Dick said, there “was a dale o’ dishes on the table an’ d—n the much on them”), and made his appearance just as the pair sat down to dinner, and had Rachael all to himself for an hour ! Dick went with him on the first occasion and slipped away when he left poor Rachael palpitating like a frightened bird, and

with tears in her eyes imploring Hinch to come no more, for his own sake.

"Hear her now," said Dick, "all<sup>o</sup> she wanted was to see the fellow, and *now!* bad luck to me but its born wid them. He'll see her often enough, *now*, I'll engage, until it is found out—and then—" and here he gave a long whistle—"oh fare-ye-well Killavy!"

Hinch came and went with impunity for some time, until some of the servants, who were in the secret, began to fear ulterior consequences, it was thought ; but how the "rights—" as Dick called it—of how the matter got to the colonel's ears is unknown. But he "appeared" one fine evening when Rachael and her lover were having sweet converse, ordered Hinch about his business, and roughly sent Rachael, crying bitterly, upstairs to her mistress! That was a dreadful night for Rachael. The lecture she had to receive ; the pains and penalties she was to undergo if she had anything more to do with poor Hinch, "a good-looking good-for-nothing" she called him.

"He's not a good-for-nothing, ma'am," said Rachael tartly, "I've often heard the colonel say he was a good young man,"—and here she flashed out—"and I *won't* have him called good-for-nothing! Please send me home to my mother!"

"Go to your bed this instant," said the Gorgon.

"*I'll put a stop to his coming here, I can tell you ! Go to your bed !*"

What passed between that amiable personage and her husband this deponent sayeth not ; but the regimental order book, containing the orders for the ensuing day, had an order in it to the effect that Sergeant Henry Hinch, of Captain Thunder's troop, would proceed by coach to Tipperary, and thence by rail to Limerick, reporting his arrival to the officer commanding at that station, for the purpose of relieving Sergeant Timeisup, about to be discharged !"

"I am very much afraid" said the old fellow, "*that was what came of Hinch visiting Rachael in that bower of bliss—the colonel's quarters.*

"What a wretch !" said the lancer's wife, who was listening to the old lancer's recital.

"Katherine, me deer," said the old man, "there are wretches *and* wretches. It was for the girl's good ! "

"Good, indeed—what did she do ?"

"Well ! she did what most of you do when you can't get your own way--she sulked and cried. Her mother came to lecture her, but to no avail. For the postman came as well as her mother, and he was the best man of the two. One day Rachael brightened up wonderfully. She asked and obtained a day's leave, saw her father and mother

and the children, was very quiet and still ; as the mother said, "she had something on her mind, poor child—" and to make a long story short, the afternoon-coach took her on the roof to Tipperary town, and the rail took her to the Limerick station where Mr. Henry Hinch met her, took her in his arms, kissed her, and handed her over to his comrade sergeant's wife, who knew the whole story, and who bade her heartily welcome.

" My blessing to her ! " said the mistress.

" Yes, Katherine, me deer, she was a good woman."

" You may depend " said the mistress—" then ?

" Then " continued the old man, " then the fools were happy I suppose ! "

" Suppose indeed ! " was the answer—" they *were* happy."

" Ah—fool's paradise ! However, by the assistance of a registrar the couple were married."

" I don't like these marriages," said the mistress.

" Well," said the old man, " it can't be so very unpleasant after all, for it answered *their* purpose, and they always spoke highly of the institution, for they were happy while it lasted."

" It didn't last ? "

" Not *then*; it was very soon known at headquarters, and Sergeant Henry Hinch was ordered there ! The row that ensued when Rachael's defec-

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tion was discovered ; its cause ; the lady's anger ; the mother's sorrow. It was a splendid embroglie !”

“ Did she go too ? ”

“ Of course she went—afterwards. Poor Harry was hunted all over the country—sent on escort here—there—anywhere, out of his turn. Rachael was outside the barrack gate, living in a room which a kind-hearted farmer's wife let her have, and which she soon brightened up. Her mother's anger was short-lived—she didn't go to the barracks, she *dare not*, her name was on the gate ! When the sergeant of the guard read the orders to the men before dismissing them—he had to read also, for the edification of these same men, a list of “ names of women not admitted into barracks ”—the last of whom was “ Mrs. Henry Hinch,” and Harry, when he read it, turned to the orderly officer who stood by, and looked at him, and that young scapegrace did there and then break out into such a “ guffaw ” as threatened to do him serious injury. However, that day Mrs. Henry received a five pound note in an enclosure bearing the young gentleman's signature, which set forth that it was presented by him “ to Mrs. Henry Hinch who was ‘ not admitted to barracks,’ which fact, he hoped, wouldn't break her heart, for he wished heartily he could get out of it ! ” Every one, except the colonel and his lady, admired the pluck of the pair. Rachael's old

mistress (the captain's wife) soon called on her, and brought her sister, a madcap girl fresh from school, and wild with animal spirits, an excellent mimic, and who 'took off' Mrs. Gorgon to the life. There was plenty of work for Rachael, and they were very happy,—but Mr. Henry had to "carry his dish very even." He was wonderfully well watched "by order," yet he was too many for them. He was not allowed leave (unless when the colonel went on leave himself for a short time), and *then* he had as much as he wished.

So they rubbed on—until a great cry was raised in the land that the regiment was ordered to India ! The colonel, the first man to go—away ! Rejoicing, by Jove ! The major to command ! The most popular captain in the regiment to be major !

" Boys, deer," said Dick Wright when he heard the news, " let us go over to Nowlan's, an' rowl out a 32-gallon cask av whiskey into the barrack yard, an' tap id ! "

Well, the colonel went ; the major reigned in his stead, and the popular captain got his majority. Harry Hinch got leave to be married (after he had been married a year, and had as fine a lump of a daughter as man could see), and Mrs. Henry Hinch could come into barracks without let or hindrance, and the list that knew her name as not being admitted, knew it no more for ever.

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“ Is she alive ? asked the mistress, quietly.

“ Faith and she is, Katherine, me deer ; alive and hearty, please God, in Clonmel, in the county you know of.”

“ Oh ! now I know,” said the mistress, “ I saw her when we were at home ; but I didn’t know the story. That’s not her name—Hinch ? ”

“ Well,” said the old man, “ it’s as good as another ; what do you think of *that* for a soldier’s daughter and wife ? ” he asked turning to me.

“ She was a trump,” said I.

“ The queen of hearts, my boy ! here’s to her.”

“ With all *my* heart,” said I, and we finished our sitting—and the bottle.

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## JACKDAWS IN PEACOCKS' FEATHERS.

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### CHAPTER III.

INTRODUCES THE READER TO TWO REMARKABLE CHARACTERS  
WHO TAKE A SHORT ROAD TO PROMOTION.

IN the year of grace one thousand eight hundred and forty-six, there lay, in the ancient city of Norwich, the head-quarters of H. M's. 166th Dragoon Guards, a regiment which Major-General Lygon said (and he was no mean judge) was second to none in the service of that same Majesty,—whom the Heavens preserve—and in that regiment were some of the most dare-devil soldiers, both in the rank and file and non-commissioned grade, as one could meet in a long day's march. There are such, of course, in every regiment in the service ; but in point of impudence, cool assurance, and carelessness of consequences, there were few who could boast such specimens as the E. troop of that most redoubtable corps. These qualities (!) were chiefly developed among their own compeers, and regimentally, but sometimes they took a wider scope and higher flight, and sought to seek, outside, the *divarshin* they could not find within the barrack walls.

Thus the present writer to the old lancer, who

was smoking his cheroot, and with the corners of his mouth drawn down and one eyebrow slightly elevated, was "taking stock" of "yours truly."

"You were no worse than your neighbours," says he.

"Better, I hope," says I.

"Bah! man," was the reply. "Every crow thinks its own bird the whitest!"

"Or the blackest!" was the answer.

"Mister-my-friend," said the old man, with becoming gravity, "there was *no* blackest. We were as white"—

"As pipe-clay could make you," said I. "You remember what the old Duke said,—The claner the sojer, the dirtier the man."

"The Duke be——"

"Don't," said I. "How did promotion go in your old brick-dust? Fast or slow?"

Whereupon the old gentleman favoured me with his ideas about promotion, with which it is beside the question to trouble the reader; and I stopped his gallop by asking him if he had ever heard, in his wonderful regiment, of a man "promoting himself?"

He confessed that such a phenomenon had never occurred in his time; nor had he heard that such a breach of the Mutiny Act, the Queen's Regulations, and the Regimental Standing Orders, had ever happened; and ventured to suggest that such a

calamity never *had* happened in any regiment whatsoever.

"Pardon me, sir," I said, "I can tell you it *did* happen, not to *one* man, but to *two*, and in this wise :—

In Norwich, then, on a wonderful fine summer's evening, there lay "on the broad of their backs," smoking the calumet of peace, two as fine specimens of the *genus* trooper as were to be found in the regiment. The barrack-room in which they were was tenantless save for themselves, and they looked uncommonly like as if they had no wish to be there—"drim-an-dhru" in fact. Their names were Cope, commonly called "Johnny Cope," and Hartley, who, in consequence of some dandy proclivities, was denominated "Buck Hartley." Cope was an educated man, and, although but a young soldier, had been twice promoted and reduced. Hartley lacked the one thing needful—education, knew his deficiency, and refused promotion. For the rest, as I have said, they were all that troopers should be.

"And more," said the old lancer.

"You're right," said I.

"They were both what is called "bâtmens"—that is, besides looking after themselves, their horses, and appointments, Cope looked after the troop sergeant-major's, and Hartley after those of the

senior sergeant of the troop. They were each, of course, paid extra for this, and although the work was sometimes irksome, yet the "clink of the tin" at the end of the month made up for all. There they lay, however, the clink of tin having been a strange sound in their ears for some days. It is true they had their pay in the morning, but what with little luxuries to grace (!) the breakfast and tea-table, *that* soon went, and the consequence was that they were there, as the Buck said, 'as dry as old bones in the valley of Thing-umy-jig'.

"What's to be done at all at all?" was his ejaculation.

"Devil a know I know," Cope made answer.

"Are ye game to go an' ax old crook (the sergeant-major) for five shillins'?"

"He won't give it, an' he'll blow me up!"

Go on an' thry, man! Who can live like this? I tell ye again, I never was in such a state av' drouth! Mount Ararat, when the waters wint off, was nothin' to it."

Cope slowly left the room, not at all sure of his success, but determined to try his luck. In the language of the great Montrose, he ejaculated—

"He either fears his fate too much,  
Or his deserts are small,  
Who dare not put it to the touch,  
And win—or lose—it all!"

"What's that ye're sayin'?" asked Hartley.

"That's what I'm about to say to *'crook'*," was Cope's answer.

"All right," said Hartley, who had never heard of Montrose in his life.

Now this troop sergeant-major was a trump card. His name was John Wrixon Becher, and his nickname was "Cruk-na-bulleen." Who had christened him in that most unholy fashion no one seemed to know or care, but the name stuck. There was a legend in the regiment that he was the son, "on the left side of the blanket," of some great land-owner, and a titled one too, in the south of Ireland, and he certainly *was* a gentleman *himself* in education, appearance, and manners, and a prime favourite with both officers and men. Cope arrives at his door : single knock ; "come in."

"Well Cope?"

"Do me a favour, sir?"

"If I can."

"Let me have five shillings?"

Crook looked at him in dismay. "Do you know how much you owe me?"

"I do ; but that you know will be wiped off when next I hear from home." (Cope was in the habit of receiving money every month. A loving mother and a dear, kind sister helping the prodigal down the hill).

"I know, I know," said Becher; "but it's wrong, it's all wrong. You will get into some awful scrape, and I'll only blame myself. The last half-sovereign I gave you was nearly getting you a general court-martial. I really can't do it. Believe me it is for your own welfare I refuse you. Are you very dry?"

"You may say that."

"Where's that blackguard Hartley?"

"He's on the broad of his back in the barrack-room, as dry as I am."

"Go to the mess and tell Stores to give you half a gallon of beer, and that will be enough for the pair of you. Go now."

Cope went for the beer, and, with the mighty half-gallon measure brimming over, proceeded to his barrack-room, where Hartley and himself rejoiced exceedingly, and made themselves glad over the contents thereof. But yet they were not satisfied; the beer, as it were, although pleasant as they drank it, turned to ashes in their mouth—because there was no more, and they highly approved of "harder stuff."

Pause while smoking. Cope *loquitur*: "Let's send old crook's gold lace cap, and jacket, and Broadhurst's ditto outside to the 'Flying Horseman'; wait till the evening becomes a little more dusky; then we'll go out in our own duds—change

'em, and, arrayed as a troop sergeant-major and sergeant of the 166th in the nineteenth century, we'll proceed quietly to the "Castle Hotel" and have a night of it! Hartley, buck of mine! if old Nobby (the colonel) does not see our merit and promote us—*let us promote ourselves!*"

Hartley looked for a moment at the speaker—"Are ye in earnest?"

"Never more in my life."

"Be gorra you're a janius! Where's that boy?"

(There are always, or were, scores of boys who ran messages for the married folks, and who were thankful for small mercies, hanging about the barrack-rooms).

The boy was found : the sergeant-major's jacket and cap, and Sergeant Broadhurst's, resplendent in scarlet, gold-lace, and chevrons, soon found their way into a barrack sheet, and in the shape of a bundle sent forth in charge of the small boy to the "Flying Horseman," to await the advent of messieurs the self-promoted.

Meanwhile these gentlemen had divested themselves of their stable duds, and as clean as if for parade, without their arms of course, the sergeant-major and sergeant—that were soon to be—on their own particular hook, wishing the sentry at the front gate "good evening" passed out full privates. Betaking themselves to the hostel here-

inbefore mentioned, they found the small boy. They called the landlord and explained to him their intention, asking him for the use of a back apartment wherein their transformation might be effected. The landlord absolutely roared at the idea, and not only let them have a back apartment, but half a gallon of beer to christen the undertaking and drink success to the expedition. The dusk was falling fast, and over their half-gallon the two proceeded to concoct their plan of operations.

It was arranged that, when it was dark enough for their purpose, they should avoid the street leading to the city ; cross the river in a small boat belonging to a man next door but one ; get into the fields at the back of a cluster of old alms-houses which then stood there, and so by the old cathedral to the Castle Hill, and thence to the hotel where they purposed to enjoy themselves.

This hotel was much affected by the higher grade of non-commissioned officers ; and the period being nearly the end of the month, when they were all busy with the accounts, there was not much danger of stumbling over any of them ; for the rest, Cope was to represent himself as belonging to the present in the regiment which lay at Ipswich (at Norwich on court-martial duty), his orderly sergeant being on duty with him, which would

account for their not having been seen in the house before ; and furthermore it was arranged that Cope was to do all the talking, Hartley confining himself to mere assent or dissent and the imbibing operations—a line of procedure to which he was not in the slightest degree averse.

These preliminaries arranged, the transformation was effected : the grubs became butterflies, and masters and men being “much of a muchness,” or nearly equal in height and bulk, I can tell you that in their own opinion they were no “small beer,” and as the landlord of the “Flying Horseman” and his wife, which is a good deal more to the purpose, (she had been inducted into the joke by her husband), declared they “looked a deuced deal better than the chaps as owned the clothes ! ” So with their caps on three hairs, the jackdaws in the peacocks’ feathers strutted forth on their expedition, “equal to either fortune.”

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## CHAPTER IV.

CONTAINS THE FURTHER ADVENTURES OF THE GENTLEMEN •  
WHO PROMOTED THEMSELVES.

THE river crossed, the fields traversed, and the main street reached, past the old cathedral, hoary, gray, venerable and massive, and turning to the left where the castle frowned grimly down on them, their spurs jingling, their chevrons glistening, the lace on their caps shining, the two cavaliers marched into the "Castle Hotel." It was rather a superior kind of a building, and had been originally a great place of entertainment for "county" people; but whether the age had got beyond it, or it got behind the age (*q.e.d.*), it was now "used" chiefly by the towns-folk with quite as much profit, and infinitely less fuss to the proprietor, than when the county magnates patronised it. It was a substantial building. You reached the hall by a few steps leading from the street; to the left was the bar, on the right was the "travellers-room," and, at the end of the hall, a massively balustraded staircase led to the upper apartments. A gasalier was shining brightly in the hall; a waiter was patiently on the *qui vive*

to welcome the coming and speed the parting guests ; and as the *confreres* in iniquity clattered along the hall, they were brought up, as the sailors say, " all standing " by the appearance of the hostess behind the semi-circular window of the bar.

Ruddy of cheek and of ribbon, plump of person, shining of teeth and bright of eye, there she stood looking up at the adventurers !

What a wonderful contrast that bar-parlour presented to the barrack-room they had so lately left ! Everything in the room—from the landlady standing there so bright, so blooming, and so pleasant, to the two damsels (presumably her daughters) demurely stitching away in their respective corners, but who had shyly looked up, for all that, to see who had come clanking down the hall—was full of light ! The lights were glancing everywhere ; sometimes from eyes ; sometimes from gas-jets ; sometimes from the legs of the table (if anything so vulgar *can* be mentioned) ; from the back of a heavy old-fashioned mahogany chair ; the star that gathered the curtains of the old cottage piano together was shining like a veritable star ; the flowers ; the barmaids bustling about, themselves flowers—the whole *tout ensemble* made the two rough soldiers pause a little. Cope of course had seen many such scenes of comfort, but not lately ; and as for Buck, the like was far beyond his

"iday." He drew a long breath after having satisfied himself that he had seen all that was to be seen, and ejaculated—

"Oh! I—"

Cope turned, scowled at him, and looked down upon the landlady.

Meantime the landlady had remained perfectly still; she was quite satisfied with the mute admiration and satisfaction expressed in the men's faces. She thought she had seldom seen two finer men, and she knew they were strangers—at least she had never seen them in her house before—and she thought she had all the non-commissioned officers for customers. As Cope looked down at her, with a pleasant glance, and breaking out into little rippling *smilets* all over, which made her handsome face one smile, she said—

"Good evening, sergeant-major."

Now, this Cope was a *very* good fellow himself; and the sight of this lady's face looking so pleasantly up at him, and the sound of her voice calling him by a title which he was not entitled to have accorded to him, made him feel so remarkably small that he was rather doubtful of carrying the undertaking in which he had engaged any further, and, to say the truth, was nearly running away; for he was no rascal—only a racketty, mischief-loving "ne'er-do-weel." But when he turned and saw

the satisfaction expressed in Buck's face, he looked down at the landlady and—returned her salutation, accompanied by a bow, the grace of which his commanding officer could not have excelled, to which bow the landlady did graciously incline.

“ You don't belong to head-quarters ? ”

No ; oh, dear no ! he had come over (he said *ovawh*, and the rascal was arranging his moustache and *posing* as he arranged. I'm afraid he *was* a little wicked) from Ipswich on duty ; this was his senior sergeant who had come with him. “ Good evening, sergeant,” (from the landlady).

“ God save you, ma'am ” (from Hartley, who forgot himself, and had a dreadful scowl from Cope).

Would he remain any time ?

Didn't know *railly* ; had heard a great deal about the Castle, its landlady, and her charming daughters (nieces, sergeant-major, from the landlady).

Aw ! *railly* ; handsome enough for anything I should say, so had ventured to stroll *ovawh* and judge for himself.

Many thanks ; would the sergeant-major and his friend step into the bar-parlour and have something ?

This the sergeant-major would very willingly have done, but he had a wholesome dread of Buck breaking out, and declined with another wonderful bow, which completely subdued the lady of the mansion.

There was very good company up-stairs, she said ; all better kind of tradesmen, and that sort of thing ; they would be glad to see the gentlemen from Ipswich ; the Norwich gentlemen (meaning the non-commissioned officers) always used that room. John ! the gentlemen to No. 5.

Cope, clanking after John, paused to listen for Hartley clanking after *him* ; not hearing him and turning round, he was horrified to see Buck taking as it were on his own behalf, another comprehensive view of the bar-parlour splendours, its inmates, and the landlady. He was standing in front of the window, his legs a little apart, the handle of Broadhurst's silver mounted whip in his mouth, his eyes glittering and his head nodding delight, as much as to say “you'll do.”

“Come on,” hissed Cope, whereat with a wink which was long enough and hard enough to include all the female community in that house residing, he deliberately faced to his right and clanked upstairs after Cope. They were ushered into a spacious apartment handsomely furnished ; there was not a very numerous company, but it was evidently “eminently respectable.”

And here I pause for a moment to remark for the edification of my Indian readers—my English readers all know, at least those who lived 30 years ago—that in a garrison town in England a

sergeant-major or a sergeant in a cavalry regiment (at that time), well mannered, well conducted, possessed of average intellectual faculties, and doing in Rome as Romans do, was *somebody* in such a company as was assembled there. There was a great predilection for cavalry-men in the town of which I speak, and a certain dash about the non-commisioned officers, which served to relieve and set off the more sombre and solid acquirements of the civilian company in the habit of frequenting such houses, made them very welcome. I suppose it is the case yet—I should be very sorry to hear it was *not*—and I have made this remark to show that I am not taking my two friends into *too* good society. *Allons.*

From all sides, then, “good evenings, sit down, gent’s, what *will* you have?” Something hard, you may depend on it, hot, strong, and plenty of it. Cigar-cases produced, pipes proffered, and that wonderful box upon wheels, pushed along the table, containing tobacco, which tobacco you could not get at unless you put a penny in a slit, when lo! the lid flew up, and disclosed the fragrant weed [that blessed box was one of the wonders of my youth]; port, sherry, brandy of Bordeaux, and humming ale, a couple of glasses whereof would make one talk of his friends; from this one, from that, until all had contributed their share towards the entertainment of their military guests.

*Then* Cope made Hartley open his eyes with astonishment. Walking leisurely to the fire-place, and selecting a spill to light his *cheroot* at a jet of gas shining *downwards* for the purpose, he rang for the waiter.

That functionary instantly appeared.

"Count heads, John." Done.

"How many?"

"Fifteen, sir."

"Champagne all round, please." Many protestations : No effect ; never so well-treated in his life ; quite unexpected ; "and, gentlemen, every one choose their own weed. There are many brands, I know ; this seems a pretty good 'un. Yes ; bring up the box, John, and you can calculate how many are used."

John disappeared. Conversation again general. Hartley muttering to himself, "Did ye ivir ! ye'd think he had the bank in the green (Bank of Ireland) at his back, an' the divil a skurrik betune him an' hivin !"

But Cope was in his glory ! Like the man in the old story, who told lies so often that he actually began to believe them solemn truths : he had been called "sergeant-major" so often in the course of the evening that he actually began to think he *was* one, and acted accordingly. He had been a chemist and druggist previous to joining, and there

was one of that profession present with whom he had much conversation on subjects they each understood. As Cope was standing with his back to the fire-place awaiting the advent of John, and to do the honours of his "round" (it may be vulgar, but it's not half so vulgar as *shout*), his praises were being circulated pretty extensively ; and it appeared evident that, although a stranger *and* a soldier, he was *the* man of the evening, and that his appearance in the character of a sergeant-major had been a "great success." No glance or look could Hartley obtain from him : he had been telegraphed to frequently, but Buck, finding himself completely ignored, "gave up his checks," lay back in his chair, and enjoyed himself amazingly.

John, with the champagne ! and a tray of glasses in the hands of a blooming damsel who had ventured from the lower regions to have a look at the dashing sergeant-major who was "a goin' it," as John expressed it, upstairs. Then the usual ceremonies, the principal of which I take to be what Buck called the "polishing-off ;" repetitions, much thickness of speech, &c., &c., and finally a break-up.

But Cope saw the last of them out. Buck was gleeful but not noisy, and was quite agreeable when he received the order to march.

"But, Tom, deer"—he whispered—"about the bill?"

"Let me do the talking—didn't I tell you that when we started."

"The devil doubt you," said Buck, "an' ye've done it; and what's more, Tom, *ye've done a purty fair share in the drinkin' too!*"

Tom laughed and said, "Come on." The landlady was in the bar-window still, a little less blooming as to face and ribbon—the gas turned down (perhaps she did not wish them to see that she was less blooming).

"Good night, sergeant-major (a little nod to the sergeant). Hope you have enjoyed yourselves?"

"Never more in my life, I assure you," coolly answered Cope, leisurely drawing on his glove, his handsome face a little flushed, but he was apparently perfectly collected. "And about the bill?"

John with the bill.

"The amount"—said Cope slowly, "is, I see, £4-9-6 (Hartley behind in a most deplorable condition). Aw! I didn't bring any money with me ma'am."

"*That was of no consequence, not the least,*" the landlady said.

"But," said Cope, if you'll be good enough to send to the barracks at about—let me see, yes, noon to-morrow—John with the bill, and let him enquire for Sergeant-major Becher of E. Troop (Buck choking), it shall be paid. Thanks—

very much." "Becher," said Cope, "please write the name, the fellow might make a mistake. Single 'e' please—yes,—that's it. You have given us an opportunity of spending a very pleasant evening, and I wish you good night." Another sweep and a corresponding bend, and this time a hand-shaking.

"Good night, gentlemen, won't you take something before you go?" "Thanks, no; again good night."

"*Good night (dear! what a fine young fellow!).*"

Away into the cool air (after getting down the steps hereinbefore mentioned) out of a heated atmosphere, the fumes of all the "generous liquids" of which they had been partaking seething in their brains, went our two friends. They went straight enough for a short time—but it was very short! They contrived to pass the Alms House (on the main road this time), cross Bishop's Bridge, and turning to their left had an intention of proceeding barrack-wards, instead of which they both—the mock troop sergeant-major and sergeant—fell prostrate to the earth, where we will leave them till another occasion.



## CHAPTER V.

'CONTINUES THE ADVENTURES OF THE GENTLEMEN WHO HAD PROMOTED THEMSELVES.

WE left the "counterfeit presentment" of the sergeant-major and sergeant prostrate on the earth a good way short of their destination, where they remained for a considerable time, sleeping the sleep of the unjust, until the dawn began to tinge the east.

The sentry on the front gate, as he steadily tramped to and fro, heard the voice of a rustic saying,—"there are two of your gentlemen lying in the road, they might be run over—please have them brought in, a sergeant-major and a sergeant, I think."

The sentry called the corporal of the guard, and the same story was told him.

"Very droll," the corporal said, "persons of the description this man mentions are not in the habit of breaking out of barracks ; yet it might be."

He called the sergeant and told the tale ; the sergeant was irate at having been awakened, and said it was—something—nonsense ; but the corporal persisted, and said there must be something in the

story. Up he got, therefore, when suddenly an idea struck him.

"Give me the list of absentees last night" he said : he got it—only two men—Cope and Hartley.

"By Jove !" said Boucher, "these are the chaps !" A file of the guard was roused, and the trio made for the spot indicated, but when they saw the "rig" as they called it, in which the couple was attired, and surveyed the generally dilapidated condition they presented, a burst of uncontrollable laughter seized them, in which the sergeant joined, and it was some time before they could proceed in the task of waking them up, pausing now and again to have another hearty laugh—Boucher standing by, "with his martial cloak around him" choking himself. Cope was the first to be roused, and as he sat up in the middle of the road, and stared about him, he presented a most rueful spectacle. After rubbing his eyes, he was saluted with a "morrow major ; when were ye put in orders ? Ye'll have to go to the master-tailor for a new shute !"

Cope could not help laughing himself, and staggered to his feet.

"Give us a hand to raise *your brother non-commissioned officer*," one of the guard said, and at last Hartley attained the perpendicular ; he was rather wild on his legs, and what horsey people call

"groggy," but he was perfectly jolly, and seemed rather to enjoy himself than otherwise.

"Hartley," said Boucher, "where did you get that jacket."

"Jacket is id?" (looking at the chevrons on the right arm, not quite so bright as they had been)  
"From the shelf av coorse."

"It's not your own."

"Devil a matter for that," said Hartley, "if iviry one had their own, *there wud be some of us nakid.*"

Here a great laugh from the men of the guard and from Cope, and even Boucher.

"Where were you Buck?" one of the men asked, as they went along the road.

Hartley gravely pointed to the Bishop's palace, and quietly said "an' devil recave the better trate-  
ment I ever got in me life! Bedad! but he's a  
grate fellow! an' as for the bishopess, and the two  
archdeaconesses (by which he meant daughters)  
**ARRAH!** *thim's the min for Galway!*"

At this flight of fancy, there was so much laughter that a little halt was called to enjoy it; meanwhile, the gate had been opened, and the whole guard (including the night-guard not yet marched off) had turned out to view the approaching procession. When they came near, the shouts of laughter were uproarious, and one recruit in particular was absolutely shrieking. To him Hartley addressed

himself as he passed into durance vile, and caused another yell by assuming the manner and tone of a sergeant well-known in the regiment as a martinet, and saying—“bad luck to ye, ye scut, *av ye laff at me I'll put ye in the guard-room*”—into which he quietly walked himself. They were both—Cope and he—locked up in the dry-room as it was called in those days, as they could scarcely be said to be drunk, but they certainly were by no means sober, and were left to their own reflections.

In the meantime, Sergeant Boucher having marched his night-guard off to the parade-ground, dismissed them (the guard of course was found by every troop in the regiment who all took the story to their troops), and proceeded to the sergeants' room, where divesting himself of his cloak and belts, and otherwise getting himself in readiness for morning stables, he called Broadhurst, who was still fast asleep.

“ Ben,” said he, “ where's your best jacket ?”

“ On the shelf, I suppose,” said Ben, looking up over the head of his bed where sheepskin, overalls, coat, and jacket were neatly disposed.

“ Is it ?” said Boucher.

“ No, it's not. I suppose Hartley has it.”

“ Pon me sowl ye're right, he has it, *on his back in the guard-room*,” and sat down on the bed and looked at Broadhurst, and the two burst into a most uncontrollable fit of laughter.

"Bad luck to him," said Ben.

"Amin!" said Boucher; "but that's not all, there's Cope with Becher's on, and ye nivir seen such a guy in yer life!"

Off they went again at score, and wiping his eyes, Broadhurst said to Boucher, "have you told Crook?"

"No," was the answer—

"Man, dear, don't, till he comes to stables, and there will be *such a lark!*"

So it was agreed; the stable trumpet sounded, and off they went to their respective troops. Becher presently made his appearance, to whom Broadhurst reported the troop all present, with the exception of Cope and Hartley, confined.

"Oh! they have come in, have they! precious scoundrels! When?"

"Brought in by a file of the guard."

"Drunk?"

"Not exactly; they had had a good sleep."

"Where?"

"On the road."

"Oh!"

"I think," said Broadhurst, "the gentlemen have been doing a little masquerading business."

"How?"

"Hartley had my jacket and cap, and Cope had yours."

"By Jove!" said Becher, coming to a dead halt, and staring at Broadhurst with a look of the most profound amazement. "Damn his impudence!" (All the sergeants of the troop were present, but they dare not laugh), and without more ado the sergeant-major made off towards the guard-room. As he turned, the sergeants-major of the other troops (laughing as they came) came rapidly up. "Mornin' Becher! are ye going to see the new sergeant-major?"

No word spoke Becher, but darting straight across the yard, went into the guard-room.

"Where are these two men?"

"In the dry-room."

"Bring 'em out."

"They're asleep,"

"Wake 'em and be——to them."

The corporal vainly endeavoured to wake them, but although Cope was asleep Hartley was *not*, and had heard every word of what had passed: knew the jobation he had to expect, and patiently awaited the sergeant-major's coming, for he knew he would come in. In went Becher.

"Cope!" No answer.

"Hartley!" "Sur," said Hartley, coolly sitting up on the guard-bed and rubbing his eyes, "*av ye had moved as much in the hoighest society as I have done, ye wud be aware that this is a most unconvaynayant*

*time to receive visitors, an' I decline to speake to ye."*  
With that he lay down again.

Becher was confounded ; he could *not* speak, but turned and walked out in a most tremendous rage. The guard of course had heard all that passed, and were in a high state of delight, but dare not show it until Becher had gone, and then the hilarity broke out. The whole regiment was laughing. The orderly officer (who was told the story as soon as he made his appearance) told the captains of troops (who came to morning stables twice or thrice a week) and before the breakfast-trumpet sounded every "man-jack" from high to low had laughed—except the commanding officer, who lived outside. The delinquents meanwhile had been ablutionized, dressed in their own habiliments, and otherwise got ready for the orderly room at 12-30, when they would have to enter appearance before the colonel, and answer for their delinquencies.

The two fellows were promenading the guard-room, laughing and chatting over the events of the previous evening ; and it was rather a good thing for the guard to have such a bit of fun happen in their tour of duty. The regimental sergeant-major had visited the guard in the early morning when the prisoners were asleep, and it was with no small astonishment that the corporal saw him (after he had dismissed the squad of recruits he had been drilling) bend his steps towards

the guard-room, and the moment after, the sentry, quietly passing the guard-room door, said "look out you fellows, here's the regimental," and here he was sure enough ; burly, broad, tall, erect as a dart, and, although he had six-and-twenty years' service, as fresh and hale as if he joined a year ago. A glance like lightning all round the guard-room, then at the guard to see that *they* were all right, the corporal saying, "guard all present and regular, sir ; two prisoners, Cope and Hartley."

"Crime's come ?" (which meant a *written charge* against the prisoners)

"Not yet, sir."

"Um" (be it remembered that both the *mauvais sujets* were in high favor with the old man for their soldierly qualifications). "So," he said to Cope and Hartley, who were standing at attention,—*shining* from boot to cap, as if they had never known a recumbent position in a dusty road in their lives. "You gentlemen, have been masquerading I hear?"—no answer. He looked at them carefully in front, got in rear of them, and came to the front again. "You don't appear to have done yourselves much harm at any rate! Cope!"

"Sir."

"Ain't you ashamed of yourself?"

"I am indeed, sir."

"You ought to be—You know a great deal better,

and how much has been done for you and *tried* to be done for you, in this reg-i-ment (that was the old man's pronunciation of the word) *and I am ashamed of you*. This is an entirely new form of racketting, not only for you but for the regiment ; it's quite a novelty, and a devilish bad example."

"Only a lark, sir"—

"Lark be—(a great puff) "you'll see what the colonel will call it ; by Jove, sir, *he'll* lark you."

Cope remained silent. The regimental turned to Hartley—"Well, sir, what have you to say ?"

"The same as Cope sir."

"Ah !" said the old fellow, "no doubt. What is this I hear about the Bishop, eh ?"

"What Bishop sur ?" said Hartley.

"The Bishop you were talking of this morning."

"Is it me, sur ?" said Hartley, "*I niver seen a Bishop in me life, unless in a picter* ; may be ye mane the Bishop Blaize (the sign of a public house hard-by) and that's a house I nivir sot a foot in !"

The regimental gave a broad grin and turned away. After some brief chat with the corporal about the manner in which the fellows had been found and brought in, he left.

Presently the troops came in from water and exercise, and many were the looks turned towards the guard-room for a peep at the prisoners, but these gentlemen kept themselves as far as might be in

strict seclusion. The charges against the prisoners made their appearance soon after the troops came in, were duly entered in the guard report, and the whole bunch of reports—orderly officer's—sergeant's—corporal's—guard—crimes, and the passes for the previous night having been collected by the regimental orderly sergeant for the day, were duly deposited in the orderly room, awaiting the commanding officer.

But these friends of ours had an ordeal to pass through before they saw the commanding officer ; they knew the adjutant would turn the guard out, and of that gentleman they stood in mortal dread. He had risen from the ranks, was one of the “best drills” in the service, and had been instrumental in placing and keeping the regiment in the high position it held. Nothing escaped him. He was respected by every officer in the regiment, and *thoroughly trusted by the chief* (without which trust—farewell to an adjutancy) ; was the friend of all good soldiers, and the terror of evil doers ; smartness and cleanliness were his two great hobbies, and a man had no chance with him in the regiment without these essentials. This was the gentleman of whose appearance our friends were afraid. They dreaded his bitter words ; as good, smart soldiers they knew that he knew them, and they also knew that he did not much care about a man occasionally “going on the long chain” (equivalent to our “war path”),

"but," said Cope to Hartley, "the first thing he will say will be—why didn't you go out in your own characters? I'd rather see the devil!"

"Be gorra," said Hartley, "so would I—and all his angels."

As they were talking, the sentry said "there's Tommy (the adjutant's nickname) going to the office!"

"Has he his sword? may be he won't come."

"You fool," said Cope, "his sword is *in* the office :" and true enough, just allowing him time to overhaul the reports and what not, the adjutant came forth, leisurely adjusting his sword belt—his little dog "Billy" trotting before him.

"Get ready," said the corporal, and forthwith there was much adjusting of belts, and getting as trim as might be for his reception. Shortly after the sentry shouted "guard turn out"—a wave of the adjutant's hand, and then "guard turn in"—and our friends gave a gasp of relief ; but he came steadily on. Entering the doorway, the corporal gave the word "attention," and upon my veracity it was obeyed in the strictest acceptance of the term ! One glance took in every thing animate in the guard-room ; without noticing the prisoners he passed into the dry-room, looked round that, and came out. He passed to the table, took up the duplicate of the guard report—saw it was all right,

and suddenly wheeling round he confronted the two. They knew what was coming, but were steady as rocks ; he stepped a pace backward and looked scornfully at them.

" Well," he said after a little pause, " you are a nice pair ! You're going on the spree I can easily understand, and think not much harm done ; but to assume the dress of respectable men and *then* do so, leaving other people to believe that *these men*, and not *you*, were in that happy condition, is so singularly contemptible, that when I first heard of it this morning I was slow to believe it."

" Sir—" broke in Cope.

" Be silent" said the adjutant—a warning finger up, " I know the miserable excuse you will make ; only a lark, eh ? Why did you lark at the expense of other people? why not at your own, and in your own clothes ? Yah !" and he strode out of the guard-room.

There was no laughing then ; the adjutant's face had got very dark as he talked, and after he had gone, Cope drew a long breath and said " he's in a devil of a rage."

Buck said—" I give you me oath there's some-  
thin' cowld runnin' down me back ! Did ye see  
his face how it darkened on us ? Tom, me deer,  
we'll catch it."

While they thus surmised, the pair heard a collo-

quy between the sentry at the gate and some person who wished to gain admittance, which was something to the following effect. Could the person see sergeant-major Becher? Certainly, there he was, walking with three others (pointing in the direction). No ; that was not the sergeant-major, who was in our house last night. The sentry knew in a moment what had happened. He laughed —that was sergeant-major Becher ; better go and see him—and the man went.

It was the man with the bill !



## CHAPTER VI.

SHOWS HOW THE GENTLEMEN WHO PROMOTED  
THEMSELVES WERE REDUCED.

As our friends saw “the man with the bill” walk across the barrack-yard, they began to feel a little in “Queer Street.” They had not been thinking of it much before, although it had occasionally come across their thoughts, but had speedily been dismissed, so many “events” had occurred to them in a short time that eventful morning, but *now* it came upon them with all the force imaginable. They looked at each other in a strange kind of way, and were by no means pleased to overhear the sentry tell the corporal that “this was the worst of it,” to which proposition the corporal appeared to assent. However, they must await further “events,” and in the meantime the “man with the bill” wended his way towards the real Sergeant-major Becher. As has been said, Becher was walking with three or four others—all of equal rank—and the man when he got near them waited till they turned, and civilly said—“Sergeant-major Becher?”

They all halted.

Becher said "yes," and took a step in front.

The man hesitated, looked a little foolish, perhaps, until Becher said—

"*I am the person you asked for, what is it?*"

"Beg pardon, sir," said the man, "but you are *not* the Sergeant-major Becher who was in our house last night—there must be some mistake."

"I should think so, indeed," said Becher, "I wasn't out of barracks last night," and as he spoke there came a sudden flash of light across his mind, and that of all the others, that something connected with what they had all been laughing at the entire morning was mixed up with this man's appearance. So they suggested that it had better be enquired into. The man handed Becher the bill, £4-6-9 in plainly written characters, and his name spelt with the single "*e*" sure enough! He held it in his hand and stared at it, and at his comrades.

"A mistake," he at length said, "never was in the house in my life."

"No, sir," said the man, "you are not the gentleman."

"Take the bill back," said Becher, "I will see about it hereafter."

The others were laughing, and one of them said to the man "would you know the men again who were in your house last night?"

"Oh ! dear yes."

"Come along," said Becher, and with that they all set off towards the guard-room, accompanied by the man.

Brought before the prisoners, the man said pointing to Cope, "this is the sergeant-major," "and that" he said, indicating Hartley, "is the sergeant who was with him."

"Go home," said Becher to the man, "I'll arrange this later."

The man wished them all good morning and left ! all the others remained.

"Cope," said Becher, "this is the worst part of a very foolish prank."

"I will pay the bill, sir," said Cope, "you know I can."

"Yes !" said Becher " I know."

One of the others broke in—"better pay it now Becher, and let Cope settle with you" (for they all knew that Cope was in the habit of getting money from home, and making a very bad use of it)—"if the old fellow hears of it there will be old gooseberry to play."

"Yes," said Becher, "I will pay it, and I hope, Cope, this will be a lesson to you." They all left laughing, and then swearing at the assurance of the fellow.

"Damn the fellow !" said Becher, "before he

went out last night he came to me for five shillings ; if I had giv'en it to him all this would have been avoided."

" Why didn't you give it ? " one asked.

" Dear me," said Becher, " I'm distracted over this business. The captain has been in *such* a towering rage all morning. When he came to barracks he was all right, and inclined to think it was all a joke, and he thought a good one, and here's the adjutant been and—by Jove there's the colonel !" at which they all scattered.

" The man with the bill " scudded off home, (*beering* by the way), and rushing into the bar parlour frightened the wits out of the landlady and her charming nieces by the following recital : that the sergeant-major, wasn't the sergeant-major, but another sergeant-major—leastways another man ; no, two, three other men, who were all sergeant-majors ; who had taken him to the guard-room where he saw the sergeant-major—leastways the man who was here last night, and the other sergeant ; no, the other man, but that one sergeant-major, who was the proper sergeant-major who wasn't here last night, said he would pay the bill—and here he gave a great gasp !

" You ass !" his mistress said, " what do you mean by coming here scaring us all like this ? Who said he would pay the bill ? "

"The sergeant-major who wasn't here last night."

"Mercy on us," said the lady, "there must be something the matter!"

Then it suggested itself to her clear woman's wit that the two young fellows who had been in her house last night had been skylarking, and had got into trouble over it, for had not that idiot John seen them in the guard-room (which to her meant chains and handcuffs, and racks and thumbscrews and such luxuries), and when she remembered the pleasant faces of both (specially Tom Cope's); how polite they had been (again Tom!) how highly they had been spoken of by some of the gen'ts, that very morning (again Tom!) she said "bother the bill! I'll go to the barracks and see about the blessed thing myself!" and ordering some kind of conveyance to be got in readiness, she swept upstairs to dress.

As was the commanding officer's custom he walked to the ante-room, and as was also the adjutant's custom he met him on the way with a list of casualties, men and horses; not a written list, but a verbal description, to be supplemented hereafter if required. The official letters had been sent in the morning, and the orders thereupon in terms of the instructions pencilled on the back of each were then waiting his signature in the orderly-room. Let my readers believe the commanding officer of *that* regiment had very little trouble with such an

adjutant, and the escapade of our friends was reserved for the very last. The colonel—he was the cynosure of all eyes that particular morning—was observed to pause while the adjutant spoke very gravely to him, and paid the most marked attention to what he said, and then to turn away from the mess-room door, and commence perambulating the barrack-yard with the adjutant, from all which symptoms the lookers-on over half-doors of stables, and non-commissioned officers bustling about, boded no good for the pair in the guard-room. At length their walk was over—the young horses looked at—a chat with an officer here and there—and a very long chat with Captain F—who commanded Cope's troop—indeed he went round his troop stables with him (for which the men were not a bit obliged to him)—then to the forge—then to the forage barn, and then to the judgment seat! The adjutant held his finger up, and in an instant from three different parts of the barracks the “office call” was sounded by as many trumpeters. All who had business had to attend at the office *then*—the paymaster; the quarter-master, the “vet”—all and sundry, and happy the man who had no business there; for, as a rule, it is not a pleasant room is the regimental orderly-room. The regimental sergeant-major opened the door for the colonel, who smiled a pleasant smile as he passed him,

and wished him "good 'morning'" (which is not common at home let me remark), the orderly-room clerks stood up, and the chief took his place in the chair of state !

Gracious powers ! a chair of state—a barrack chair ! and such surroundings, barrack table—small table for the adjutant—chair for ditto ; long barrack table for the clerks, benches for ditto ; a big coal-box, long-handled broom, a poker, and shovel of most portentous dimensions ; bare floor—list of barrack utensils on the wall, some regimental boxes, and there's a regimental orderly-room, and many a score of times the present writer has said " and may who you know fly away with it !"

The casualty reports looked over—all the reports ditto ; requests acceded to or the other—a blushing cornet asking for a three days' run to town—a look at the adjutant, a glance in return, and the young fellow made happy by, "yes ; leave your address." (You must understand, my reading friend, that these two, the colonel and the adjutant, had a language of their own, that is to say, the colonel's look said, "how is he getting on ?" and the adjutant's glance made answer—"very well, indeed, sir ;" and that's how the young gentleman got his three days' run to town.) All these matters being adjusted, there have been several officers hanging about with screw-backed books under their

arms, records of wickednesses, defaulter's books no less, the others having filed out, *they* file in, some with business, some not, Captain F—, the gravest of all, and both his subs, with him—one a very little fair-haired young gentleman, the son of the head colonel of the regiment (his father is a lieutenant-general) and the pet of the regiment.

"Thats all?" the chief interrogates.

"Thats all, sir," answers the adjutant, the colonel nods, the adjutant nods to the regimental, who has been standing at the chief's left hand, facing the adjutant all this while, immovable as a statue, and a thousand times better to look at, and he opens the door, and accompanied by a file of the guard, Messieurs Cope and Hartley stand before the commanding officer.

The orderly-room clerk hands two defaulter-sheets to the adjutant, and the chief reads from two slips of paper the charges against the two men; they had been very mercifully dealt with, for the gist of both was that they had "been absent from watchsetting on such a night, until such an hour on the following morning, when they were brought into barracks by file of the guard *improperly dressed.*"

You see, my friends, what Captain F—had been bothering with the adjutant for all morning; why the captain had taken the colonel round his

troop stables?—all on account of these two good looking soldierly, well-set-up scamps! .

“ What have you to say, Cope ? ”

“ Nothing, sir.”

The chief held out his hand for the defaulter sheet, which, when he got, he put, with Cope’s crime, on one side.

“ What have *you* to say, Hartley? ”

“ Nothing, sir,” said Buck.

The same process gone through with *his* defaulter-sheet and crime, the old man looked at the two, and he thought to himself he had never seen two finer soldiers—but he didn’t say so by any means.

“ How have these men been getting on lately? ” he asked their captain.

“ Two of the best men in my troop, sir. Indeed, I am sure you have no better in your regiment. They have been doing well for so long, that I can scarcely express the regret I feel at this break in their conduct. Indeed, I was about to recommend Cope for promotion ; but of course, sir, this renders it impossible, and all I can do for him now is simply to say what *I have* said. Willing, useful, always there when wanting, double-horsemen both, sir, and withal—”

“ Whose man is Cope ? ”

“ Mine, sir,” said Becher, who stood behind his captain.

"How do *you* find him."

"Everything I could wish, sir."

"He gets money from home?"

"I believe so, sir."

"Well, captain, about Hartley?"

"I say the same for him, sir, in a different degree."

The chief nodded.

"Whose man is he?"

"Sergeant Broadhurst's, sir."

"Sergeant here?"

The regimental opens the door and beckons, and our friend of the morning steps in and salutes his chief.

"Sergeant Broadhurst," said the chief, "how do you find Hartley get on?"

"The best man I ever had, sir. (Broadhurst waved away but doesn't go out).

And now the chief looks at his right-hand-man (and the two culprits are in terrible fright)! In answer to the look the adjutant says :

"I can say nothing less than their captain, sir." (culprits much relieved). The chief takes the two little slips of paper and turns them over in his hand and thinks a good deal apparently, and long, and then leans back in his chair and looks at our friends in tribulation. Finally he breaks out—

"It is quite incomprehensible to me how men so highly spoken of should make such (what you

know) idiots of themselves. Lunatics by Jove! In the blood I suppose. (He turned to Captain F.—) You were about to recommend Cope for promotion?"

"I was, sir."

"I hear something about his having *promoted himself* without having been recommended or promoted by *me—ME*—but by Jove! I'll promote you, sir: 168 hours' cells, 14 days' kit drill, and 7 days to barracks (Cope very thankful, and hopes nothing will come out about the bill). And for you, Hartley, who were *not* about to be recommended, I hear—it's not before me—that you have followed suit." Here he looked at Becher. "These fellows hunt in couples sergeant-major?"

"Yes, sir," said Becher.

"I thought so" went on the chief: "great pity to divide the happy pair! You will have the same punishment as your—your—*brother non-commisioned officer*, and I hope you'll like it—take them away," and as they were being marched off, a most extraordinary apparition appeared at the orderly-room door—a carriage and in it a well-dressed lady, with a nicely gloved hand on the carriage door, enquiring for the regimental sergeant-major! The regimental knew in a moment that the lady belonged to the Castle Hotel—he had heard all about the bill—and was afraid that, should that matter leak out now, it was all over with the culprits.

"Oh!" said the lady; "don't, Mr. Holt, for heaven's sake don't; I don't care about the bill!"

The colonel heard all—he instantly rose from his chair, pushed every one aside, opened the carriage door, and with the gallantry of his race—his remote ancestor came over with the conqueror—assisted the lady from her carriage, and giving her his arm conducted her into the room and gave her a chair. He held up his hand to the adjutant, who simply said, "Stand fast every one!"

"Now," said the colonel "what is this? Please tell me."

The lady was very much distressed; but at length said that she was afraid some mistake had happened about a bill. "Two of your young gentlemen were in my house last night, and—and—there was a little bill—and—and I was afraid they might get into trouble, and so—and so—I came to put it right. I don't want the bill—there (and she thought it was all right!).

The chief in a moment saw through the "complication," and ordered the "whole bilin," guard and all, back into the office, with the addition of some loungers who had no business there at all. The chief addressed the lady, pointed to the culprits (blushing excessively) and asked were these the two men? and she said yes, and again besought the colonel for mercy for them, for that she didn't want her bill—

"The woman and her bill be——" he said—but she didn't hear him.

"Pardon me," he said, addressing the prisoners—"which of you, in addition to your other qualifications, had the audacity to contract this debt?"

"I did, sir," boldly answered Cope.

"Can you pay it?"

"Not at present, sir."

Here the lady again said that she did not care about her bill.

"Hush! pray," said the chief.

"Well, sir"—(the chief was getting ruffled.)

"Beg pardon, sir," said the little fair-haired sub-altern of Cope's troop—we have seen come in with Captain F.—"May I say a word?"

"Certainly, Mr.—"

"If you please, sir, all this has arisen from a mere frolic. You may remember last year, when I was bathing in the Exe, that Cope saved my life?" The colonel nodded.

"Allow me to pay the bill—I owe him a great deal more than that! and—and"—

"Well," said the chief—

"Kindly forgive them both for my sake."

The chief sat down quietly in the chair, the lady was about to break out afresh, but an awfully black look and a warning gesture from the adjutant prevented her. The chief thought a little: so still

was the room that, although there were at least twenty persons present, you could hear the ticking of the time-piece on the clerk's desk—and at length he broke silence.

“ Sergeant-major, where are these crimes ? ”

They were put into his hand (he had written the punishment across each), and he tore them into small pieces.

“ Go,” he said, “ for—come along F.—”

“ Fall away the guard,” from the regimental ; and away went Cope and Hartley,—triumphant, though reduced !

No one thought of the lady save Tom. He conducted her out of the orderly-room, opened the carriage door and assisted her in, and he was well rewarded for his politeness if unanimity of feeling *could* have that effect, for *they were married three months afterwards*, and it is not too much to say that he still, “ under his own vine and fig tree,” tells the story of how he and his comrade promoted themselves.

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## DAY AND MARTIN'S POLISH.

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### CHAPTER VII.

SHOWS HOW DAN MARTIN APPROVED THE MAJOR'S CHOICE, DROVE HOME IN A BUGGY, AND TURNED OUT THE GUARD !

"What," said the old lancer to me, after he had rejoiced at what he considered to be the luckiest episode in Tom Cope's life, "with examinations *before* they join ; and cramming and examinations for their promotion, *after* they do join, and many another thing besides, the officers are not the same stamp of officers as they used to was."

"Nor the men," said I.

"True for you," said he, "the second and third periods of service (to the devil I pitch them) only go to unsettle a fellow, and prevent him from making up his mind to see all that is to be seen during the time Her Majesty," and here he reverently took off his hat, "God bless her ! may require his services ! These were the days, my buck ! You knew you had your four-and-twenty years to put in, if you were spared, and you made the most of it ! Show me the fellow among your country youngsters who had been among horses all their lives,

that was better off than a private dragoon, and who could go round a pair of horses and saddles on his heel like a lady in a ball-room! They hadn't half the work; they were not so well fed, perhaps, but they didn't grumble; they had what takes a young fellow's fancy—glare, and dash, and glitter, and they had youth and health and plenty of fine exercise, and were twice the men of any ledger-poring, desk-rubbing snobs of fellows they saw every day, with a stringhalt in their walk, and a hump on their back like the dome of Saint Paul's! I have known men so fond of the service, with all its ups and downs, as to teach their boys they could't do better than remain in it, and get on, and jokingly tell their girls, when they were old enough, that there was 'a dashing young sergeant in the heel of his fist for them when they grew a little oulder.'"

And such a man was old Dan Martin (the fellows in the troop used to call him 'Day and Martin,' because he was swarthy in complexion), who had three or four sons (besides daughters) born to him in the regiment and who all enlisted in the corps, or married in it, or were transferred to it.

Now this Dan had a son, who, when Colonel Molyneux was a beardless cornet, was a very small shaver indeed; and "ould Dan" was Cornet Molyneux's servant, and young Dan (precocious as

barrack-bred imps invariably were) who was only just able to toddle about, and get in people's way, was a mighty favourite with the cornet and his chums, and was taught as many tricks as a monkey by these fast young gentlemen.

Master Dan the younger, was left pretty much to his own devices, and the ways of the young cornet and his brother officers being uncommonly free and easy, and being to him ways of pleasantness, why it followed that they were well, and constantly trodden in, and the quantities of four-penny and six-penny bits, which the gentlemen distributed for the behoof of young Dan were unlimited, and that young gentleman took advantage of his position, and became the pickle of the family of "as fine childer, God bless them," ould Dan used to say, "as you would see from here to there"—which "there" was indicated by a wave of the hand, and might mean Cochin China, as well as Belturbet in the country of Cavan, which was Dan's calf country.

"Where would you find *now*," asked the old lancer, "a servant's child running about his master's room, and playing the pranks that young Dan was never done playing? Man, dear, the young gentlemen have got old before their time, I'm told, and are hoary before they are brown! Ah! well! well! Perhaps it will turn out for the best; but you can't get me

to believe that the old "*gra*" of the officer for his men, and the interest they took in them and their belongings will ever be replaced among the officers and men who join and are serving now, or that the same kindly feeling is cultivated, which once had the effect of binding them all together in an *esprit de corps* which it was found very hard to dismember.

This case is a case in point. Young Dan's father took his discharge where young Molyneux became a lieutenant, and years after, died at home at the lieutenant's "own place," in the north of Ireland, his other sons and daughters being provided for, young Dan was "bird alone" with the old fellow. He was getting big, strong, and able to groom a horse and put a polish on a pair of boots "equal to satin, be gorra," and it was arranged between the young officer and the old man that young Dan, when he was old enough, should enlist in his father's regiment, and become young Molyneux's servant.

Well ; old Dan was gathered to his fathers, and the young fellow, left to the freedom of his own sweet will, got into some foolish scrape, and enlisted in an infantry regiment, "unbeknownst" to his friends.

These matters permeated through "the ready" (young Molyneux's mother) even unto India, where the regiment had been sent in course of its tour of service ; and by hook or by crook, after he had

attained the rank of captain, the young Molyneux determined that young Dan should be transferred to *his* regiment. To work he set to attain this object, and what with his commanding officer's and his own and family's influence, it was no very difficult matter to obtain young Dan's transfer from the regiment into which he had enlisted, to that in which he had been born.

Indeed, if all the stories told about Master Dan were to be believed, his colonel was rather glad to be rid of him than otherwise, for, although he never committed any very serious offence, yet his *penchant* for getting into scrapes was uncommonly facile ; and moreover, he had a happy knack of drawing others along with him, and his departure from the regiment of his choice was—not to derelict from the youngster's character—hailed as a “good riddance of bad rubbish.”

But he was going among men who had known him since he was born, and with whom he had been “reared,” as he elegantly phrased it, and after he had gone through his drill, “sure he was to be the young master's servant, and what d'ye want more, me deer.” Well; Dan came out in a draft from the dépôt, and joined his corps at a frontier station *then*—but now—be this and be that “interjaculated” the old lancer—“the frontier has left it on the plains long ago !”

He was as fine a specimen of a young soldier as need be, and picked up his drill in no time, but before he was, as it is called, "dismissed," he gave his new comrades an indication of what he could do in the way of mischief and humbuging, and where both these qualifications were at a premium, you may depend that young Dan was a welcome guest at the many freaks planned and executed by "the boys." Dan was of course in the "young master's" troop ; and it was well known "he was the white hen that never laid away"—"one of the twelve," the men used to call him,—a saying which, I may here explain, is regimental, and arises from the fact that a captain of a troop has always a select twelve men in it whom he desires to keep, and whom even the commanding officer will not transfer to another troop, and so the nominal roll of a troop has to be consulted before a transfer can be arranged. [I have known a man or men to be recommended for promotion *to get rid of him or them out of the troop!* and *they* knew it, too, and if they were well off, and didn't care much about the troop to which they were about to be transferred, they would not go an inch—till they were forced to go, and many a man has forfeited his promotion because his captain would not part with him or *vice versa.*]

Thus young Dan had good times ; and it so fell

out that the major of the regiment was about to be married to a dashing young lady, the belle of the station. Now this major had been Dan's father's captain once upon a time in the old days, and had shown kindness to the young fellow since he had joined, and it was with no very pleasurable feeling that he heard of his (the major's) projected change in his manner of living, which meant fewer rupees, and fewer odd jobs, and fewer glasses of grog, and pints of beer to Dan ! And he made his moan thereof to his troop sergeant-major's wife (who had been a gossip of his mother's).

"Arrah !" said Mrs. Corcoran, "what ails the choidl ! Why wouldn't the dacent man marry before he gets too ould entirely ?"

Dan confessed that there was reason in the matter from *that* point of view ; but irreverently remarked that he (the major) might have consulted *him* in the matter, as he (Dan) bad made up his mind that he would do something for him, and that this marrying business would put an end to it all.

"Musha, then," said Mrs. Corcoran, "but ye have the devil's impudence ! Ax you indeed—and she the finest girl in the north-west."

"Is she *railly* now ?" enquired Dan, "av she's a dasher, I wont mind so much ; but sure I nivir seen her, so how can I tell ?"

"I'll tell you, then," said Mrs. Corcoran, "there's

to be a ball at the officer's mess on Tuesday night, and I'm goin' up to help the ladies to dress ; you come an' ax for me, an' I'll show you the young lady the major's goin' to marry. An' see now, Dan, don't you be goin' to the canteen, or *Bagdaddin* (all old soldiers know what *that* means—getting grog on the sly , “ but come sober an' civil, an' as far as a bit av supper an' a glass av grog goes *aft her y'eve seen her*—I'll ensure ye !”

“ Be gorra, I'll come,” said Dan.

“ The devil doubt ye,” said Mrs. Corcoran, and with that she tucked her skirts up and bade Dan good night.

As she went she repented of her invitation, but relying upon her own and her husband's influence upon Dan she allayed her fears, and said he was a fine young fellow, but it was a pity he was “ so full of thricks.”

On the day of the ball she called Dan and told him that he must on no account let any one know he was going there ; not to go in regimentals, but get some kind of plain clothes (which in those days was no hard matter), and to be particularly discreet in his behaviour. To all of which small matters Dan did seriously incline, and with many protestations coaxed a “ tot ” out of the old lady, and left her satisfied of his discretion.

The afternoon faded into night ; the ball was to

be a grand affair ; the mess-house was brilliantly decorated, and from far and near “fair women and brave men” were invited, and were coming to the entertainment, which was rendered doubly interesting by the circumstance of the gallant major and his fair *fiancée* being to “show” on the occasion. Dan was in his glory ; he had procured a fitting rig as he thought ; and, when it was time, he “covered himself up decently” as he expressed it, in a padded and quilted overcoat *then* much in vogue in the Punjab and the north-west (and if I am not mistaken affected even *now* in these degenerate days), and set forth, “well primed” on his expedition.

He soon “made out” Mrs. Corcoran, who, as good as her word, smuggled Dan into the ball-room, where he was ensconced in a corner until the young lady made her appearance, of whom he (Dan) was to approve as a fitting partner for his friend the major, and she said “Dan, ye devil,” said the old lady, “I think ye wor at the canteen?” (interrogatively).

“Ah! now, mam,” said Dan, “is it afther me solem promiss I’d do the like! I’m ashamed av ye!”

“Well, well,” said the old lady, “stay quite”! (quiet), and off she went, leaving Dan to his own resources, which were speedily displayed in dodging

round corners, getting among the band fellows, and swilling more grog than was good for him. Mrs. Corcoran, worthy soul, came looking for him as soon as the young lady had made her advent, but no Dan was to be seen, and reproaching herself bitterly for having invited him at all, she betook herself to her "tiring room" to await his coming, for she was sure he would return, which he did, and persuaded her to accompany him once more to the ball-room, and point out the lady. She did this, "more," as she said afterwards "for pace an' quiteness, than any harm;" and accordingly Dan speedily saw his friend the major with the lady leaning on his arm, to whom he (the major) was whispering "soft nothings."

She was very beautiful, and Dan's admiration and genuine Irish love of grace and beauty fairly "overtuk" him. She was pointed out to him by Mrs. Corcoran, who wisely, as Dan said, "took to her scrapers," and left him alone in his glory.

"Be gorra," said Dan, "she'll do! May I nivir! *av I was fifty major's rowled into one,* I'd marry her meself! Oh! then! Major dear, it's you that's in luck's way, an' I hope ye'll keep in id!"

Thus Dan soliloquised in no very low voice, and just as his conduct began to excite observation, he quietly departed, and taking his way to the back of the building where the carriages and horses were

stationed, he gravely sung out, "Syce—syce!" One of these gentry less somnolent than his fellow-servitors woke from a slight (but refreshing) nap at what he thought was the sound of his master's voice, and scurried off towards the direction from whence the voice proceeded, shouting, "Ahcha, sahib," bringing a horse and buggy along with him, into which Dan incontinently got, took the reins, and drove off in the direction of his regimental lines—the sable spirit he had invoked (in the shape of the syce) fast asleep behind him.

On his way to the lines he had to pass an artillery guard—the sentry walking up and down the front of which challenged him. Dan boldly answered "rounds;" the corporal "fell in" his guard; "guard all regular!" queried Dan; "all regular, sir," said the corporal. "Dismiss them," said Dan, and drove off.

[To which I may here add that there is a legend yet current in the regiment, that this particular guard, when the officer had been round, used to take off their belts and go to sleep—and that on this occasion they adopted their usual practice, and went to roost and when the *real* officer made his appearance, the whole guard was as fast as a church, and came to grief: it may be a fable! But *then*, queer things happened.]

Dan continued his drive, and instead of driving

to the bungalow in which his own troop was quartered, he drove to another, of the end compartment of which the sergeant-major, a sober, steady-going, rather religiously inclined man, was the occupant. This non-commissioned officer had gone to see the *tamasha*, and the bold Dan had no difficulty in persuading the syce to take away the buggy, and promising him a rupee on the morrow if he came *there* for it, bade him an affectionate good night, and left him, the syce, taking mental note of the locality.

Meanwhile the owner of the horse and buggy had been searching in vain for his "convaniancy;" and the poor syce got more kicks than ha'pence on his return. But he told his story, and the owner reserved for next day his visit to the lines to test the truth of his servant's statement, and drag the offending soldier before his commanding officer who would, he was assured, on the delinquent being recognised, inflict on him most condign punishment. We will leave the sergeant-major unconscious of the ordeal he had to undergo, and Dan keeping the whole of his squad awake with a relation of his adventures at the ball-room ; his homeward drive ; and the reception the syce would get from old blue-light (the serjeant-major's nickname) when he went for his rupee in the morning.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

SHOWING HOW DAN MARTIN "TUCK TAY" WITH THE  
"BOORD AV ORDNANCE," AN' SOULD A SINTHRY-  
BOX !

WE left Dan keeping his squad awake with his description of the visit to the ball-room ; the annexation of the buggy ; the turning-out of the guard, and the fix in which he had left the sergeant-major. On the following morning, or indeed the same morning, for it was towards the small hours that the circumstances hereinbefore narrated had occurred, there was a general lassitude amongst the officers, and it was sometime before the irate proprietor of the horse and buggy could obtain an audience of the chief, and urge his complaint against the person or persons who had, wickedly and feloniously and with malice aforethought stolen and away-taken a buggy with a horse thereunto attached, &c., &c. But he had not been idle in the meanwhile. He had made the circuit of all the bungalows under the guidance of his syce, who had taken him to that where he had left the buggy and horse, and on the sergeant-major (who was about the same size and build as Dan Martin)

being called out, he was at once recognised by the stupid horse-keeper as the "sahib," who had driven his master's horse from the ball-room.

Loud were the sergeant-major's protestations of innocence, and deep his wrath at the syce, who in his eagerness to satisfy his angry master, got more positive in his identification as the master got more sceptical. Of course, the regimental sergeant-major (who was with the gentleman) explained to him of the buggy, who by the way was a civil servant, high and mighty, and with all the prestige of Jehan Company Bahadoor surrounding him—that the syce *must* be mistaken ; that the non-commissioned officer, on whom the onus had been thrown, was a person quite incapable of indulging in an escapade with such a termination ; that it was more likely to be a trick performed by some devil-me-care, harum-scarum trooper than a staid, sober, prayer-meeting-going troop sergeant-major, and he advised that the matter should be left for his investigation ; that he would institute enquiries and report the result. With this the civil servant was obliged to be contented, and he and his syce departed—the former dissatisfied—the latter in a state of the most direful perplexity at *one* man not turning out to be *another* man, and *that* man owing him a rupee !

But the regimental sergeant-major continued his

perquisitions, and stumbled on the real delinquent in a very simple fashion. He was in the sergeants' mess, waiting (honest man), for the sounding of the dinner trumpet, and happened to overhear the "bald, disjointed chat," of three or four sergeants (among whom was the band-sergeant), as they waited for a like purpose.

"I wonder," said the sergeant, "how Dan Martin got home to the lines; he was wofully screwed, and just got off in time to escape being sent to the clink" (which means, gentle reader, lock-up!).

"By Jove!" said the regimental to himself—"Dan Martin! screwed, eh? That's the fellow who took the buggy for a thousand dibs! I must see about this after dinner."

Of course the story got about touching the artillery guard, too; and there was much laughing at the way in which they had been taken *in* so much as to turn *out*, and much commiseration expressed at the grief to which they had come in consequence of mistaking Dan Martin for the officer of the day.

Meanwhile Dan had received his jobation from Mrs. Corcoran, who roundly rated him for his conduct in the ball-room, for which Dan apologized, by saying that indeed it was small blame to a stronger-minded man than himself for being a little put "out of his cheek" by the fascinations of the *fiancée*.

"What are ye grumblin' at, mam deer," said Dan, "sure av a field officer wid a thousan' a yeer, is druv distraected widt the same craythur, what the devil dy'e expek from a private! An' indeed she's a whipper! and *iligantly drissed!* *Sure I could see the trace av yer own finger among the ribbins, the way they were fix't.*"

Which compliment to Mrs. Corcoran's abilities and skill as a tire-woman brought forth the "tot"—which was all Dan wanted, and he retired as he said himself—"at the slope!"

But Nemesis was in wait for him! There was a lion in his path in the shape of the regimental sergeant-major who "boned" him as soon as he made his appearance, having contrived to extract from the squad, and elsewhere in the troop Dan's "general character and previous convictions."

And when he found that he *had* been discovered, he did not make any fuss about the matter, but made light of the questions which thick and fast fell on him—

"Ye took a horse and buggy that didn't belong to ye?"

"I called the syce, an' he brought it; I wanted to go home fair and aisy—an' I wint!"

"Ye turned out the guard?"

"The devil a fut—they turned out themselves!"

"Ye said ye wor the rounds."

" Begorra I did ; an' it was quare rounds I was !"

" Ye towld the sergeant to dismiss the guard."

" Faith an' I did. It was a pity to keep the min stannin' there."

" Ye drove to the wrong bungalow."

" Arrah ! how do I know ; sure I didn't think av id."

" Ye promised the syce a rupee."

" Oh, thin, that's no grate matter. *I was only sayin'* ; and like yourself sergeant-major, *I say a dale more nor my prayers.*"

" Take him to the guard-room," said the regimental ; and Dan was forthwith consigned to durance vile, where he made the best of a bad bargain.

There was no " weeping and wailing," nor cross-questioning *there* ; Dan's exploit was hailed with shouts of delight and laughter, and it was well-known that a week's drill would be about the length of Dan's tether for this bout. Said the corporal of the guard to Dan—

" Ye had the cheek of fifty pigs, an' that's what they're killed for, to take the decent man's buggy."

" Korplor," said Dan, " I tuk the horse to exercise him a bit ; he was in danger of gettin' a swellin' in the legs waitin' till the ball was over ! Take a horse and 'buggy ! Begorra, I done worse nor that in me time."

"What's that?" enquired the corporal.

"Begorra, thin," said Dan, "*I sowld a sinthry-box!*"

At which hearing the entire guard formed a square and besought Dan (with tears of laughter indeed) to tell them the story—which he did in this wise, and which we shall, for the convenience of the reader, divest of as much of the brogue as possible :—

"In the regiment I left," Dan went on, "there was as bright a set of ruffians as ever took the shilling ; most of them hailed from Dublin, and a set of more unmitigated double-breasted jakeens never listed ! (Here Dan looked round—rubbed his knees, and smacked his lips at the remembrance of the various charms of the society he so graphically described).

"Them *was* the boys, if you like, for roasting the life out of a drill-sergeant, breaking the heart of a regimental, and keeping an adjutant going ! There was nothing they wouldn't do for getting to the top of Nelson's Pillar in Sackville Street, giving a false alarm of fire in the Rotunda, or disguising themselves like Zozimus of old, and forming quartette parties of wandering minstrels on the quays. And yet they were what were called "fine soldiers," —that is, they were well drilled, set up, and in their appearance on parade, perfectly irreproachable.

" Dublin is a full-power city!" said Dan, " and 'tis there, although the duty is hard and the field-days more frequent and more lengthy than a feather-bed fellow likes, *you can get your shilling's worth of fun for a shilling!* HURRA! said Dan, " go to the 'Two Soldiers,' 'The Enniskillen,' the 'Royal Rook' (the proper sign was the Crow in Dan's time) and, me deer, ye could make a night of it, and go into the barracks in the morning with a supplement to the *Times* round you instead of your regimentals!" (Here a loud shout of laughter attested the truth of Dan's statement).

" Well, we had a pleasant time, and like all other pleasantries, it wouldn't last. We were ordered off to Enniskillen! and although our pockets were of the lightest, and our journey somewhat long (there was no railroads in those days), we started and arrived in due course."

" For myself," said Dan, " I was in a most deplorable condition. I hadn't as much kit as would dust a flute; and all the coin in my possession you could put in your eye, and never a worse you'd see; and for guard, too, worse luck, the day after we got in!

" Bad luck to me," said Dan, " and it's my usual luck! Boys," he said, looking impressively round upon his most attentive audience, " I'm like the man in the play; if I had been born a hatter, little

boys would have come into the world without heads on purpose to vex me!" (Another roar.)

"Ah! you needn't laugh. It was no laughing matter, when after a 'subscription rub,' as we used to call getting ready for a guard where one fellow lent one thing and one another, and every one lent a hand to turn you out, I found I had three-quarters of a mile to trudge from one barrack to another to my post, a magazine detached from the barrack, and about a quarter of a mile away from that. The only relief was that the post was by the side of the road; it was market day, and there was a chance of a wet. A sentry-box was there, but the weather was beautiful and a finer day I never saw. My "sentry go" was from two till four and the country folks were getting homeward when I was posted, and although of course the farmers and cottiers as they passed, bid me the time o'day, sorrow one of them said what I wanted them to say. Very near the time for my being relieved a hard-faced old farmer came jogging along, and halted opposite the sentry-box where I had formed up standing at ease."

"Evenin', sojer," said the old man.

"And you too, dacent man," said I, "*twice—in case I would not see you to-morrow.*"

He nodded and smiled, and said pointing to the sentry-box with the butt-end of his whip—"That's a fine thing to keep the rain off!"

"Be gorra it is," said I, "and the sun—that's what its here for!"

"Is it, now?" said he.

"It is, sur," said I, "and very handy we find it."

"I wish I had one like it," said he, "in the stack-yard to shelter the boys when they do be keeping the birds off the grain!"

"Would you like it?" I asked him, "I'll sell it to you!"

"Faith and I would *jost* like it, if it was not too dear entirely," said the farmer.

"Not much of a price," I said to him, "and you could take it on the cart with you."

"So I could," said he, "what do you want for it?"

"I want," said I, "ten shillings and a pint of whiskey."

"I'll give the ten shillings," said the old man, "but not a taste of whiskey have I."

"Well," said I, "never mind—throw in another shilling, and I'll get the whiskey after."

"A bargain!" said he—and the sentry-box was sold, and hoisted on to the cart by passing country people, who, poor simple souls, knew no better, and without other witnesses than these parties and an old apple-woman nodding over her wares, the sentry-box was gone and myself eleven shillings the richer!

"Wasn't I in fear and trembling," said Dan, "in

case the relief would come and catch them hoisting the sentry-box into the cart! But my luck took a turn, and by the time the relief came the sentry-box was gone! Of course being our first guard it was never missed; nor was it for many a day! We had a long stretch of fine weather, and sentry-boxes were at a discount; the guard was relieved all that time, and the sentry-box never was missed, and still it was signed for in the guard-report, as having been given over and taken over—when it was many a mile away. Every time it came to my turn for guard, I was in a tremor lest I should be for the 'magazine,' as they called it, but it was not until about six weeks after that I was warned for the duty! In all that time I had been often thinking about the blessed sentry-box; wondering when it would be missed; who had *given* it over, who had *taken* it over, and when the row would commence, for row there surely would be as all the utensils, &c., are signed for by the non-commisioned officers as they relieve each other. Well, when I passed the place where the sentry-box ought to have been, I took a look and saw the ground all trodden by the sentries' footsteps pacing up and down, and although it was a pleasant spot enough, I thought it would be pleasanter if the row was over, and I was determined it should be over—sharp.

"Number one post was on the guard-room door ; Number two was the detached post, *that I was for.*

"Where will I go," asked I, "if it comes on to rain?"

"Into the sentry-box of course," said the corporal.

"Devil a sentry-box is there," said I, and at that there was the *quare rushskin!*

The corporal sent for the regimental sergeant-major, and there was a terrible shindy ; one non-commissioned officer should not have given over the guard without every single article, poker, shovel, tongs, hand-cuffs, locks, and keys being all correct, and the other should'nt have taken the guard over, and both non-commissioned officers were confined.

"Who is for the post," asked the regimental sergeant-major ; "who missed the sentry-box?"

"I did, sir," said I.

"Oh !" said he, "*you did ! How long is it, Martin, since you were on here before ?*" (He was looking very crooked ; I can tell you !)

"Six weeks ago, sir," said I.

"Well," he said, "I suppose you are out of it ; but if you had been on later, not a man in the regiment I'd swear that knew more about the box going than yourself." You see, boys ; what it is to have a good karakter !"

So we got another sentry-box ; the police were

searching for the lost one all over the country till it was found. The old man could not identify me ; he lost the box ; the Board of Ordnance declined to prosecute him, and my eleven shillings was a windfall.

"And the corporals" asked one of the guard—

"Oh !" said Dan, "the corporals got off with a wigging—as I'm going to get of to-morrow, please God."



## CHAPTER IX.

SHOWS HOW DAN MARTIN GOT OVER IT.

LEAVING the guard to prolong the laugh they certainly enjoyed at the recital of the impromptu auction of the sentry-box, without the intervention of the Board of Ordnance, turn we now to the dilemma in which the regimental sergeant-major found himself when he had the secret in his possession as to who had really taken away the horse and buggy from the officers' mess, and who had driven it to the troop sergeant-major's quarters. The day was yet young—few officers were about, and as universal "boon" hung over the regiment, he had loads of time to consider. Nathless the matter lay heavy on his mind, and taking heart of grace, he went to the adjutant's quarters, who, truth to be told, if matter so vulgar can be here set down, was in nearly as bad a condition as regards thinking as he was himself. The adjutant had lain himself quietly down to rest after having disposed of the morning's reports, and was hardly prepared for the advent of the regimental. But, officer-like, he was equal to the occasion, and the loud "come in" answered Holt's knock.

"What's the matter," said the adjutant.

"Matter enough, sir," said the sergeant-major.

"Any one dead?" said the adjutant; "order a firing party, and mind that you don't send Cranston, for he will be sure to singe the fellow's whiskers who stands next him."

"No one dead sir; but worse!"

"Here's a civil servant who lost a horse and buggy, and has found it again, and he thinks that such losses and such findings should be taken notice of, and registered in the orderly-room."

"Well?"

"That's all, sir!"

"Good morning, Holt."

"But sir, the man who took the horse and buggy belongs to the regiment."

"Very well"—he couldn't belong to a better. Does he come from Cork?

"He does."

"That's enough." Whereupon he turned and with the last strains of the "Stolapine" ringing in his ears, he was calmly disposing himself to sleep when he was suddenly startled into his adjutancy again by hearing Holt say—

"It was Dan Martin, sir, who took the buggy!"

"Dan Martin!" said the adjutant.

"Yes, indeed, sir," said the sergeant-major.

"By Jove! Damn his impudence."

" By all means," sir, said the sergeant-major, " but its done!"

" How do you know?"

He told me so, and he turned out the artillery guard on his way.

" He does not deny it, then?"

" No."

" What did he want with the horse and buggy?"

" To get home from the ball-room as fast as he could."

" And turn out a strange guard by the way?"

" Yes. Anything to get home."

" And what, in the name of Providence, took him to the ball-room?"

" To see the ladies, he says."

" Who is the man whose buggy he took?"

He was told.

" A good fellow," said the adjutant; " I'll see him."

" Do you know, sir," said the regimental, that Martin says he went to see *one* lady. She is about to be married to the major, and he says that having once seen her, his feelings so overpowered him, that thinking he had been in good society all his life, and, *although being soldier-clad, he was major-minded*, he called a syce at the door, after having admired the major's *fiancée* and went home thinking the buggy was his. The only way to get the man off is to tell

the major, sir. You will do two things. You will please the major, and the lady will be delighted at the tribute paid to her charms."

The adjutant laughed very heartily, not only at the escapade, but at the excuse offered for its committal.

"In the meanwhile" said the sergeant-major, "you must inform the chief, for without him we can do nothing, and I have come to you to let you know, in case our civilian friend gets before me with the information."

"I will go," said the adjutant, "to the chief myself."

Up he got accordingly, and went to the commanding officer, who was in great humour at the success of the ball, and who laughed very heartily at the adjutant's account of the *historiette* of the buggy and horse.

All names were of course suppressed, and the chief wondered which of the *griffs* had performed the feat, little thinking, poor man, that the trick had been performed by his *protegé*, Dan Martin! Finding that his chief took the matter in the light in which he wished it to be taken, the adjutant left him, and went to the major's bungalow which was close by. Him he found in state, and before he had been a minute or two in the house, he found that the story of the horse and buggy had preceded him, and that the major was delighted at the amount of "check,"

which had been displayed in carrying out the trick. It must have been—he said—this or that officer who had done it.

“No officer,” the adjutant said, “but a full blown private, sir !”

“Never !”

“Yes” !

“How do *you* know ?”

“I know everything,” said the adjutant—“and I know the reason why the man went on foot and drove back in a buggy.”

“What was the reason.”

“*To see your intended.*”

“Eh !” said the major.

“Yes !”

“And the man”—

‘Dan Martin’ of Captain Croker’s troop !

A roar of laughter followed the announcement, and the two officers sat laughing at each other until the servants thought they were demented !

“Now the thing is,” said the adjutant, “to get the fellow out of the scrape. He has got in it simply enough, because the gentleman whose buggy Mister Martin drove off with, has reported the matter, it has come before me *only* officially, but considering the cause and the effect, *I do* think that he deserves to escape. What do you think major ?

“By the god of war !” said the major, he *shall*

escape, or I'll buy another horse and buggy and give it to the heaven-born man who complains!"

At which the adjutant left him, beseeching him to see the commanding officer as speedily as might be, and by no means neglect informing the lady of his love of the compliment which had been paid her, and the sore tribulation into which Mr. Martin had been led on account of her charms.

As good as his word, the major set off to the chief, to whom he related all the adjutant had told him; he also gave the reasons why *Pauddeen* had committed the escapade, and spoke on his behalf.

The chief who had been as big a divil as evir ran—said that there was nothing about it as yet.

"I know the man," said the major.

"Ask him to dinner," said the colonel, "and we'll have Martin to wait on him, and then tell him 'twas he stole the buggy!"

"Done," said the major.

"And Martin?" said the colonel.

"Is in the guard-room."

"Ah!" said the old man, "a good place for him. I'll see *him* to-morrow."

Leaving the colonel, the major saw his intended wife, and the news flew like wild-fire over the station, that a private dragoon had been so smitten with her charms, that he had stolen a horse and buggy, turned out a guard belonging to another regiment,

and was now awaiting martyrdom for her sake in the guard-room.

On the the following morning when the orderly-room call sounded, Mr. Daniel Martin, number twenty-one of Captain Croker's troop of the one hundred and eleventy-eleventh Light Dragoons was brought before his commanding officer on no particular charge, but being suspected of having driven away with a horse and buggy belonging to another person. That other person had reported the matter to him—the regimental—and he being constrained to enquire into the case had discovered that Martin was the culprit, *and by his own confession* he was sorry for what he had done, but the fact remained.

Captain Croker, appealed to, said that Dan was a servant, and of course was not so much under his observation as a dutyman, but that he had the reputation of being—

“That’s all right ! said the chief.”

“Holt !”

“Sir ?”

“How did you find out that this man”—pointing at Martin with the feather end of an immense quill, “drove away from the mess in a buggy ?”

“He told me, sir.”

“Did you tell him that what he was about to say would be used against him ?”

“No.”

"Why not."

"I didn't think of it, sir."

"Think of it another time, Holt."

"I will, sir."

"Martin,"—said the chief, you are a great scoundrel!

"Sur," said Martin, with all the assurance in the world, and looking as if he had been paid a high compliment,—“ I have known that for many a day ! and it's every day I'm towl'd it ! *But not to-day, sir !* ”

"Why not to-day ?

"Bekase I lost what little karakter I had in tryin' to furgot a purty face ! I wint into the buggy because it was brought to me, and I struv to forget the pretty face I seen in the ball-room as soon as possible by going home to my barrack-room and looking at my own, which is none of the purtiest—God knows."

"And that's all ?"

"That's all, sur."

"*I cannot use your own confession against you*" said the colonel—what do you say, major ?"

"There is nothing to confess, sir, said the major. "I have a letter here from (naming the gentleman), and he says that Mr. Martin is welcome to a drive *for the same reason*, any time he fancies one if he ~~will~~ first give notification."

"Ah!" said the colonel. "Fall away Martin!" And Martin emerged, "clean as a new pin." But before him was another ordeal. "Dan, you're for mess to-night." (That is, he had to wait at table). "The captain has given particular orders that you are to wait to-night.

Dan rubbed his chin, but knew he had to go, and with many objurgations he laid out "his things" as he called them.

He went to mess and it was wonderful the request in which Martin was held that night. The major called him,—both majors indeed,—the colonel—his captain—all the subs, and he little knew that a plot had been hatched among them, the climax whereof had to be reached by the major questioning the gentleman of the civil service on the subject of the loss of his horse and buggy on the night of the ball.

The major said to his guest at length "was the horse injured at all? knowing well that the driver was listening).

"Oh dear no!" answered the gentleman "not at all. He had been carefully and deliberately driven. The buggy, too, was in the same state in which I left it, and, said he, looking "I think that some of you young gentlemen know more about the real delinquent than you choose to confess;" and looking very hard at a young officer who had the reputation of being uncommonly fond of practical

jokes, "I think, Devereux, you know something?"

"Not I, indeed," said Devereux.

"I heard that one of the shafts was smashed," said the senior captain, winking at the major.

"Beg your pardon, sur," said Dan interrupting the conversation, to the great astonishment of the guest—"Sorrow smash! The shafts is as whole as ivir they was!"

"How the devil do you know?" asked the civilian; the officers meanwhile laughing loudly at the astonishment with which Dan was regarded by that gentleman.

"Why, sur," said Dan, "the devil recave the man knows better nor myself—for 'twas me that done *id*, an' I know too much av horses and buggies not to take care of them when I use them whether they're my own or not; an' thank you for the drive, sir, for the horse is a stepper, an' I wouldn't wish to sit behind a better."

A roar of laughter followed, in the midst of which Dan retired, and that's how he got over it.



## THE DESCENDANT OF THE GREAT O'SHEA.

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### CHAPTER X.

(INTRODUCES MR. MARTIN O'SHEA.)

“ You talk of ‘fool-rogues,’ I said to my friend of the ‘old blue with the brickdust facings, and number one of number onest—the right of the line my boy !’ as the regiment used to dub themselves, but *we* had a ‘fool-rogue,’ if ever one drew a sword in Her Majesty’s service. He was the model of a dragoon ; an excellent horseman ; a swordsman of great skill and dexterity, and, what was the delight of our colonel’s heart, a man who could walk round a pair of horses and a couple of saddles after a hard field-day in the ‘ Phaynix,’ like a cooper round a cask ! Everything he ‘laid his mind to,’ as the phrase went, he excelled in—and believe me, my friend, he had paid much attention to rascality, and excelled in *that*. In all matters of burnishing, scraping, and polishing, from the tongue of a buckle to the peak of a helmet, Martin O’Shea was *the* man for Galway. He seldom mounted a guard, for he (unless a defaulter) invariably was told to fall away by the adjutant as the cleanest man on parade ; or, whether by fugling’ or no, ‘drew the long cut,’ and was

commanding officer's orderly for *that* tour of duty. And in the ranks, mounted or dismounted, Martin knew his place as well as any man in the regiment, and many a young officer and non-commissioned officer he saved from a wigging by whispering the proper word of command into their ears, and putting them straight, when they were in sore danger of being crooked. But the bold Martin had a failing. His love for 'Innishowen' when in the Green Isle, or 'ould Jamaiky' when in England surpassed the love of—well—I can't find a simile. But, indeed, I suppose in the words of the native of Cork—'Nobody better *could* love it.' This love, to which he was always faithful, was, together with a 'neglected edukashin' as he styled it, kept Martin sorely in the back-ground. And although frequently in trouble for some of the most ridiculous and petty scrapes imaginable, and sometimes for grave and serious offences, his ready wit, his stolid imperturbability, and his never-to-be-daunted assurance, carried him triumphantly over the clouds of difficulties which hovered upon the representative of the 'anshint discindant av' O'Sheas !' ' You know,' said I, 'what a handy man can do in a troop. A man who knows his work, does it—and helps a comrade; is willing and no grumbler, notwithstanding graver defects in his character than intemperance becomes 'a fair-haired boy' in their

troop, and ‘one of the twelve.’ To all intents and purposes Martin was a bright and shining light of this species. When sober—and he could drink as much whiskey as would float a 74, and show no token of it—he was every thing amiable ; and when he was ‘over the score,’ he never showed at all ! He had a horror of being confined for being drunk, although all knew his failing ; and whenever he discoverd that he was too far gone for what duty was required of him, he was off to some out-of-the-way corner, and did not make his appearance until either brought back, or it pleased his will and pleasure to return, and render an account of himself. And even then his reputation as a good, clean, and intelligent dragoon, as the regimental standing orders expressed it, stood him in good stead. He had been much among young horses—had a light hand and a firm seat, was patient and even-tempered—all essentials in a young horseman—and the consequence was that he was thrown much among the officers while breaking in their chargers—and when a dandy trooper was wanted by a troop sergeant-major, Martin O’Shea’s good offices were secured for that animal.

“ Did you ever buy a trooper ? ” asked the old lancer.

“ Deed and I did,” say I, “ and paid five shillings for him too, and he was taken away from me afterwards.”

The old fellow laughed, “I know,” said he, “all about that;” for the reader must know that if a dragoon took a fancy to a young horse which would mount him, and be a good horseman, some of the non-commissioned officers who might take a fancy to the animal would purchase him, such purchases in my day used to be common enough. I don’t know how it stands now.

But to return to Martin. Of course all commanding officers of cavalry troops are “horsey.” Some more than others, and our chief was a wonderful man for ‘young uns’—provided he had bought them himself. For the rest, you may depend they were screws, a weedy lot, and so forth, and when he *had* a fancy animal, the daily visit to the young horse stables was not enough. Half-a-dozen times a day he would be there.

‘ This rare colt—that gem of a filly, bought for a song, sir, coming on, lord bless you ; fit as a fiddle—look out O’Shea, and have him brought ready for the ranks, sharp ! ’

‘ You may depind, sur ;’ was Martin’s answer ‘tis you has the eye for a horse, sir, an’ small blame to ye (the colonel was a County Mayo man), for ye wor always among them ! ’ and away went the “chief” with his hand stuck in the breast of his regimental frock, his old forage cap on the back of his head, and his nose in the air. Martin “had the

loan of the old man properly," and wheedled him to the top of his bent, *that* was the secret of Martin's immunity—and he was wide-awake enough to curtail his excesses when the major had command ; and when the colonel married, as he did shortly after I joined, loud were the lamentations of O'Shea.

" See now,' said Martin, ' bad luck to them for ladies ! wid their *wallacin* (waltzing) an' *collo-nadin'* (promenading), couldn't they lave the old man alone. He nivir used to go on lave, only to Howden or Mullinguar whin he wint to buy horses ; or whin he wint to shoot in the sason, an, now ! whoo ! he's off the divil iviry month in the year !

' Arrah, whist'—another fellow would say, ' how many a mile across country did that slip of a girl ay your's lade you, before ye jined ?' ' Man, dear, it can't be helped, an' make the worst an' the best av it !' Ould as ye are, Martin, I don't know av ye wor tuk wid *that* sickness, but that ye'd folly (follow) ye're sweetheart as far as a crow would a potato !

" I will give you a specimen or two of Martin's way of doing *outré* things when he was all right ; and punishment for which he escaped, when another man might not have been so lucky :—A young officer (if I remember rightly, his name was Knox) joined Martin's troop, and whether it was from the novelty of the thing or no, he was very particular in requiring the men to salute him, but not quite so

particular in acknowledging it. One day, in Manchester, Martin was making his way to the pump, with a bucket in his hand, for water. Now any officer, who had a grain of sense about him, never expected to be saluted in these circumstances, and if the man had no forage cap on, would not have been saluted at all, but Mr. Knox was of a different opinion. He watched Martin to the stable found out his name, and reported him to the adjutant. Stables dismissed, Martin was had up :

‘Why didn’t ye salute Mr. Knox, O’Shea, when you passed him to-day going to the pump?’

‘*Is it wid the bucket av water he wanted to be saluted, sur?*’ rejoined Martin.

‘Not exactly,’ said the adjutant, grinning, ‘but he is very angry because you did *not* salute him.’

‘I’m very sorry, sur,’ said Martin ; ‘I hope he won’t have occasion to find fault wid me again !’

‘That’s enough,’ said ‘Tommy’ (all officers have nicknames with the men)—fall away !’

But Martin was not done with the young officer ; he had it *in* for him, and was determined that he should be even with him. After cleaning his horse and kit next day, Martin lay in wait for his particular friend, and at length he saw him walking in the barrack-yard with three or four other officers. Martin seized a couple of buckets—darted out of the back-door, and off with himself to the pump,

where he filled both buckets, and airily swinging them in his hand marched across the yard towards his stable.

Of course the story of the officer reporting O'Shea for not having saluted him had been 'ventilated,' and there had been much laughing on the subject among the officers, as Martin could very well see as he advanced, for the gentlemen with whom Mr. Knox was walking called that gentleman's attention in a very marked manner to the advent of O'Shea, double-bauked with buckets.

'By Jove, Knox!' said Captain Forster, (Mad Jack the men dubbed him) here you are! Here's O'Shea with two buckets instead of one, and if you're not about to have it for yesterday's work, I'm a Dutchman! The gentlemen turned on their promenade as he spoke, and Martin gravely came to a dead halt, placed the two buckets on the ground, drew himself up to attention; and looking Mr. Knox full in the face, *saluted that gentleman with both hands!*

A roar of laughter burst from the others as they watched the proceeding. O'Shea lifted the buckets and proceeded with much deliberation to the stable, while the irate cornet, livid with rage, rushed to the adjutant (notwithstanding the remonstrances of the other officers, and, to use an expression, still I have no doubt, current in the regiment 'Martin's feet

never touched the ground until he was in the furthest corner—that is in the ‘clink,’ ‘the digger,’ ‘the corner shop’ or any of the thousand and-one names whereby the men designate the guard-room.”

And there, until another occasion, he shall be left.



## CHAPTER XI.

IMPROVES THE READERS' ACQUAINTANCE WITH  
MR. MARTIN O'SHEA.

WE left Mr. O'Shea in the guard-room, where he made himself very much at home, as indeed he might, being a pretty regular guest in that caravan-serai—so regular that there was a legend in the regiment that Martin had, one month, refused to pay for the washing of his barrack sheets, on the ground that he had never slept in them, having been “in the guard-room every night in the month an’ released at *rivally (réveille)* soundin’ in the mornin’.”

However that might be, there Martin was. If he could have eaten twenty dinners, Martin might have had them. If he cared for smoking hogsheads of tobacco from crates of pipes, they were at his service ; and from one end of the barracks to the other, nothing was talked of but the way “ould Martin” had “taken tay” with “Johnny come-lastly,” as the men christened Mr. Knox.

“An,” said an old file, as he turned in for the night, “won’t there be the devil’s divarshin, when the pair av them is brought before ould Justice for Ireland (the colonel’s nickname) in the mornin’.”

So Martin slept the sleep of the just, and troubled himself less about the consequences of his adventure than any man in the regiment.

The conversation on the subject of Martin's escapade was not confined to the barrack-room by any means. For it was talked of, and laughed at, among the officers ; the Benedictines told their wives about it (there is a good deal of "barrack" talked of among them), and all knew Martin, for he was a "monstrous pretty fellow," and poor Knox, the young gentleman who had caused the *tumasha*, had been chaffed about it to such an extent as to justify the historian in supposing that the bed *he* slept on was not a bed of roses ! The colonel (the old Bash—another nickname) had smiled grimly when the adjutant had mentioned the matter to him, and pulled his moustache in a good-tempered way (there were no beards in those days) ; the captain of O'Shea's troop was furious ; and the riding-master (old Fisty) had expressed himself in language the reverse of parliamentary, when the rough-riding sergeant told him that the "head of the ride" (a ride consists of 12 young horses) was not likely to be present in the morning. But all these things disturbed not Martin's rest, until about half-past ten at night, he was rudely roused from his slumbers by the corporal of the guard, who said the "Regimental" wanted him. This official is high and mighty—the chief

of the non-commissioned officers, and next to the adjutant—the greatest man in the regiment, *bar* the commanding officer. Gathering himself together, Martin got up and soon found himself face to face with as fine a man (emphatically) as any in the service. Universally respected and really *loved* in the regiment, it was impossible to withstand the frank honesty of the glance of his hazel eye, or to avoid admiring his stalwart frame, the ruddy brown complexion, the crisp, short hair, moustache and whiskers which surrounded his face. Quick in temper, yet as quick to forgive as to take offence, there are many men yet alive (although there is small chance of any of them reading these lines) whose “bacon has been saved” by the old fellow, and many a fine old soldier has had reason to be thankful that he was drilled or taken up by the regimental. A wonderful thing it was that Martin O’Shea never tried any of his “dog’s tricks” on the old man.

“So,” said he, “you’re in trouble again, O’Shea.”

“Not much, sur,” said Martin. “I wasn’t drunk any how.”

“Worse,” said the sergeant-major, “insubordinate in your actions!”

“That’s not much, sur,” said Martin.

“Not *much!* I wouldn’t care to see what you call *much*, if this is little. I am afraid you’ve put your foot in it.”

"Well, sur," said Martin, "all I can say is that I must get over it the best way I can, an' if I've burned me sate, I must sit on the blister!"

The sergeant-major walked off laughing, and Martin chuckled to himself as he felt that he, at least, was not offended with them.

Morning came, and with it more fun and more laughing ; the day wore on, and the regimental call for defaulters sounded (it was the first half-dozen bars of the "Robber's Call" in "Der Freichutz"), and Martin was marched off to the orderly-room, where "judges were met—a terrible show." That is, *the judge*, "ould Justice for Ireland," surrounded by a whole *posse* of officers, who were attracted by the *cause célèbre*; for, as a rule, officers are not at all partial to making their appearance in the orderly-room, unless they have business there, but to-day was an exception. Martin was placed (between a file of the guard, the corporal in rear of them) before his commanding officer. The old man's face was very stern ; his hair was white as snow, and his grisled moustache bristled, and his clear eye twinkled, as he read what was written on an oblong slip of paper (an eighth-part of a sheet of foolscap was the regulation size). The writing was to the effect that the prisoner "No. 511 of Captain Croker's troop of the 66th regiment of dragoon guards was confined

for having been disrespectful in his actions to Cornet Knox, of Captain Forster's troop of the said regiment, on the 21st instant." This document was signed by his captain, and on the back thereof was written the names of the witnesses. Called upon to plead, the whole of the audience with the exception of the "chief" and the accuser and accused, were stifling their inclination to laugh, as best they might, and with much gravity Martin unburdened himself as follows, as nearly as I can remember :—

"Disrispick, sur ! Is it me ? Oh ! thin sur, shure ye know me this three and twenty years, an' in all *that* sheet, sur (he alluded to the defaulter-sheet, which the colonel had his hand upon,) whatever else ye find, sur, ye'll find no disrispick ! Shure, sur, a day or two ago, this gintleman (turning to Mr. Knox) reported me to the adjutant for not salutin' him when I had a bucket av' water in me hand ! When I seen him agin, sur, I had two buckets thin. Musha, sur, I thought to myself, if he reported me for not salutin' him wid one bucket, he'll ate me up entirely if I don't do id wid two ! So, sur, I put them both down, and saluted him wid both hands, one for the day before yesterday, and the other for yesterday, for I mightn't see him to-morrow. *Disrispick ! be gorra, sur, 'twas conciliating him I was !*"

[The "Repale" movement was at its zenith at the time.]

Martin's ideas of conciliation were received with a shout of laughter, in which the colonel and the cornet could not help joining, from the midst of which Martin walked a free man, while Mr. Knox got a bit of a wigging for being a shade too particular.

ANOTHER illustration of Mr. O'Shea's turn for taking a rise out of a young officer who was too particular may amuse you. In our regiment the saddlery was kept "in oil" as it was called all the week, but on Sunday, when the commanding officer made a point of visiting rooms and stables, the bath-brick and polishing leathers, the burnisher, soap, and sponge went to work, and every buckle made one wink again as they shone with brightness. The bit and bridoon were hung first on the saddle peg, the curb being tastefully disposed across both ; then the saddle was put on the peg over them, the stirrup irons (bright as silver) hang on each side of the bit, passed through the end of the bit rein which held all together, and the three large buckles of the surcingle (also shining like a shilling) relieved one side, while the rosette on the breastplate (or martingale) relieved the other. The buckles and studs on wallet, shoe-pocket, and <sup>\*</sup>crupper were burnished to match, and, as you know, said I, 'a well swept

stable, well-groomed horses, and shining saddlery (not to speak of the men) make a sight at which the heart of a captain rejoiceth, and a commanding officer glad. Every troop vies with another ; and for a stable or a room to "get credit" or "honorable mention" is no small glory. Now Martin O'Shea, of all men in the corps, was a mighty saddle-cleaner. There was a tale among recruits that once, parading for barrack orderly (mounted), Martin had been dismounted, the cloak and valise taken off the saddle, the wallets taken off, nay, the very pilch itself, and only the bare tree and girth left on the horse's back, and it was found that not only was every strap and string and buckle thoroughly bright, and in as perfect order as well could be, but the very staples fixed on the tree, and on which the flaps, panels, and pilch were fitted, although generally hidden from sight, were as bright as the boss of the bit or the rosette on the breastplate ! And that there and then all the orderly non-commissioned officers were fallen in by the adjutant, who told them that *that* was the way he wanted an orderly to be paraded. Furthermore, that he had, on the same occasion, said that O'Shea was a credit to the service, and an example to all young soldiers (!) and ordered that he should parade for barrack orderly no more, and that he should be missed when it came to his turn for that duty. Non-military readers will not

understand the effect of an incident such as I have described, but it has had the effect—more times than I could count on the fingers of both hands in my own recollection—of *setting three hundred men scrubbing "for the bare life" on the chance of having a similar compliment paid to any one of them*. Well, sir, to such a saddle-cleaner as O'Shea, the bare suspicion that *his* saddle could be aught else but A1 was death ! Yet a young officer, doing duty with the troop to which he belonged, excited his deadly ire by putting his gloved hand on the bar of the bit one fine Sunday, and twisting it round to see if the irons were as clean in rear as in front, and generally disarranging the symmetry of Martin's arrangement.

“Bad luck to him,” said Martin, “does he think it’s a goold face an’ a pewther back he has to dale wid ? Av he does, he’s mistaken !”

Whether by accident or design the same officer, on the very next Sunday, performed the same operation on Martin’s bit, and that gentleman swore a mighty oath that, “av he touched his saddle next Sunday, he’d remimber id for some time !” It may be necessary here to explain, that in those days (30 years ago) the racks, mangers, bales, posts, and saddle-pegs were iron. Everything could be unscrewed, the bales from the posts, the saddle-pegs ditto. So on the following Sunday Mr. Martin

prepared an ovation for the young gentleman who delighted to honour his saddle with so much attention. After the saddle had been carefully cleaned, and tastefully put upon the peg, Martin went to the barrack-room, provided himself with a bed-wrench, and unscrewed carefully all the nuts which fastened the peg and its bracket to the post, leaving them in such a condition that a very slight touch would bring the whole fabric down ! Of course all the men in the stable (except the non-commissioned officer) knew all about it, and awaited the result of the adventure with much admiring anxiety. Everything was "done-up ;" back and front door cleaned; utensils upright, not a stray straw about ! The men loitering for the sound of the forage trumpet, when walked "Buck Heywood," the officer, his sword clattering, his glass in his eye, and his cigar in his mouth. Passing, and glancing as he passed, at the men and horses, the word had been given 'stand to your horses,' he halted before Martin's saddle, got the bar of the bit in his hand, twisted it round, bringing the *whole apparatus about his ears*. He said no word, rushed out, calling for the sergeant-major, while in a trice Martin had the nuts screwed on as tight as wax, and was busily engaged in getting the traps in order (swearing the while) when the sergeant-major made his appearance, attended by all the orderlies about ! But no clue to the accident could

be found, or to its cause. Nobody knew *how* it was done.

"But you see," said Martin, "it was a good job the little Buck didn't get his head broke wid the saddle-tree, anyhow, he niver comes into the stable now, good or bad—an' when he does come, I'll bet you a gallon av beer *he doesn't come near my saddle!* I see him looking mighty hard at me the other day in the forage barn. *I think he'd know my skin on a bush!"*

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## CHAPTER XII.

### MR. MARTIN O'SHEA MAKES HIS CONGE TO THE READER.

MARTIN's progress from the stables to his barrack-room was of the most tortuous description. He sought byc-ways, and found himself in the canteen, where he was assailed on all sides with congratulations on his "look" (luck) in getting off so easily, and finally, after demolishing more pints of bitter beer than was good for him, he betook himself to his bed to slumber off the effects of the bitter beer aforesaid, and to growl at all and sundry who attempted to disturb him. He was in the habit, when he wished to be unmolested—and depend upon it in whatever room in his troop he was, he was the oldest soldier and must be obeyed, since even the non-commissioned officer, "the ink of whose attestation was not yet dry," Martin used to say, was fain to wink at his eccentricities, humoured him—he was in the habit, I say, of drawing a chalk line round his cot; gravely and deliberately divesting himself of his outer garments—pressing one man to cut his tobacco, another to fill his pipe, and a third to bring a light for him, and after he had the *dudheen* fairly started, he would say "Ye see that line, boys !

Let no man under the rank av a field-officer attempt to crass thim boundaries widout *my* special lave an' permishin ! Sae now ! av a man disturbs me I'll, I'll trate him wid the contimpt he desarves, an' that's a quart in the mornin' whin the pay comes in !" Among much laughter and joking Martin used to "embrace the rug" as it was called, till nearly stable time, when he would get up, and be off to his horses as fresh as if nothing had happened, and no one who saw him among the pots on the table in the canteen that night dancing a jig, or heard him trolling out " Me name is bould Kelly," would fancy for a moment that Martin had narrowly escaped condign punishment that day. So it was ever with him, and he pursued the even tenor of his conciliating ways much to his own satisfaction.

As I mentioned to you some time ago, and he told the colonel when in the orderly-room, Martin had more than three-and-twenty years' service ; the half-yearly inspection of the regiment was approaching, and the general officer commanding the district in which the regiment was quartered was very speedily to be called upon to decide whether a descendant of the Great O'Shea was a fit and proper person to be admitted to the benefit and immunities of an out-pensioner of Chelsea Hospital, and become one of that noble band who—

" Lived on half pay,  
And spuit half-a-crown on a shillin' a day !"

after having served Her Majesty four-and-twenty years. It was well known in the regiment that Martin—that bright and shining luminary—was about to set in the regimental horizon, and you may depend that he failed not to improve the occasion. He had no fear for the future, for he was a hale, hardy, healthy man not much over forty years of age, and moreover his “bread was baked,” as he elegantly termed it, for the captain who had last commanded his troop, an Irishman like himself, had bespoken Martin’s services when he left the regiment. Captain French lived at Carrigdhuv, a beautiful spot near Cork, and it was quite refreshing to hear Mr. O’Shea drawing such pictures of his future as made those unfortunates who had long periods to serve, and who had all their sorrows before them, like the young bears, grow pale with envy.

“ Soldiering is very fine,” Martin would say, ‘bedad it’s beautiful to go to a field-day in the Phay-nix, or to canter to exercise on a mornin’. It’s mighty fine to go to a guard mounting at the Royal Barrack, an’ see the delight the sojers give the lookers-on ; but me dear ye’ll find *that ye had a grate deal better be in bed*, that’s av ye’re not sick ! For the sojer’s portion is *plenty to do, and little to get* ! But—was his constant adjuration—be content wid your daily pay—an don’t sell yer ammunishin

*boots*—this being an infantry bit of slang, which Martin had imported. “ So, now, I’m off to Carrigdhuv in a month or two, and ye’ll miss me sorely ! Give me that carbine, you stookawn” (to a recruit who was cleaning one) “ ye have as much iday of clanin’ that as a dog has of his father ! *I’ll put the French polish on the mahogany popu-lashin av that ould shootin-stick !* ” .

And he would rub and whistle and sing, or spin some wonderful “ cuffer,” and have all the men in the room round him, who he fairly enticed into “ something like soldierin’,” as he called it. If ever a recruit lagged in his work, or showed evidence of sulk or wanting encouragement, he was always made over to Martin ; and wonderful was the transformation effected. Martin showed him the short way to do everything ; coaxed him, helped him, made him work for him, smoked his tobacco, drank his beer, and “ made a man of him.”

“ Look now,” he would say, “ bedad I’ve made more sergeant-majors than the colonel ! and three or four men, glory be to God ! is officers now ! and good luck to them ! I first taught them how to put their belts together, an’ how to clean a helmet, and burnish a sword-scabbard ! I got a five-pound note the last time young Stillman came down on lave ! That was the lucky chap ! I seen him when he joined ! He had been on the batther, and listed,

and wouldn't be bought off. There was the fellow cud ride the tail of a horse. Be the great St. Pether ! he had a horse wanst they called the Sikh, an' he backed through a plate-glass window in Dame Street in Dublin, an' the Lord Liftinant ped twenty poun far him !

"Are ye sure ?" asked a doubtful youth.

Sure ! ye scut ! sure, is id ! Be gorra, I was on the castle guard, an' tuk the money an' brought back the rasate !"

"How did you know it was the money, Martin ?" persisted the youngster.

"Know is id ? didn't the Lord Liftinant till me himself.

"Martin, says he,"

"How did the Lord Liftinant know yer name ?" was the next question.

"Name ! bad luck to the sojer in the army whose name he doesn't know," answers Martin "an' small blame to him. *Why shouldnt he know everything whin we know nothing !*" which finished the youngster.

"Bud," continued Martin, "luck was that chap's (Stillman's) godfather ! He was made lance corporal the day he was dismissed his drill, an' be this and be that he never cried crack till he had the blue coat on him (an officer's undress frock). He had the walk of an Impior ; he had an eye like a hawk ; an' a voice like a trumpet ! Damme sur ! roared

the old fellow getting enthusiastic “when that fellow had the regiment at squadron drill, and he had it before he was two year a sojer, he made us start at his word of command like a thunder-clap ; and when he set us agoin he kep us goin *as the devil went through Athlone?*

“ How was that ? ” a young fellow would ask.

• *In staynin' leps,* av coarse ; an’ now to see him whin be comes on lave linkin arams wid the ‘Ould Bash, an winkin at Polly Jocelyn, an’ Melfort Campbell, the proudest men in England, an’ axin for O’Shay ! Be gorra, I wish he was on lave iviry day in the week axin for him ! Rub ! you boys ! you don’t know what you will come to ; there’s good stuff in ye *av we could only get at it.* An’ keep on improvin’ ; don’t let the sergeant-major ivir have occashin to tell the captain ; he was a good boy once, sur, *but he’s dreadfully altered !* ” Thus acting, it may well be supposed that Martin was everywhere a favourite.

The last time previous to his discharge that Martin was brought before the commanding officer was a great cause of fun in the regiment. The troop had been giving the old soldier an ovation, and Martin had fallen into the hands of a Philistine in the shape of a young corporal belonging to another troop who had made Martin’s offence a regimental one which could only be dealt with by the colonel.

And thus so for the last time, Martin got ready to face the "old man."

"I've seen him so often," said Martin "that I know every hair in his moustache, an' the devil a wrinkle on his face I'm not on winkin' terms wid ! But I'm goin' to get over him this time ; boys deer, have any of ye a litter covered wid post-marks ?" (This to one of the guard) "ye have ! go bring it, and ye'll see what I'll do wid it !" The letter was brought, and sure enough it had post-marks on the envelope, "to carry it to New Zaylan," Martin said, putting it carefully in the breast of his jacket, and so prepared for the encounter which at length took place.

"O'Shea," said the colonel, "I'm sorry to see you here !"

"And so am I, sur," said Martin demurely ; "I've the worst of the bargain !"

"Be silent, sir," interpolated the adjutant.

"Beg your pardon, sur," said Martin, very gravely.

"I had thought," continued the colonel, "that going away so soon, and to so respectable a service as is that of Captain French, O'Shea, you would have turned over a new leaf."

"Sur," answered Martin, "I can't turn over a new leaf !"

"Why not ?" asked the colonel.

*Bekase the laves is all full, sur, an' the devil a wan left to turn ; but I'll buy a new book an' begin afresh to-day !*

There was much laughter as usual, and Martin was told to "fall away," but he hadn't done yet. After thanking the colonel for his manumission, he said—

"Sur, ye have always been kind to me, an' I'm goin' to lave the regiment. An' I want to tell you what druv me to drink this time!"

"Well ; what was it?"

"Sur, I have a fine slip av a girl av a sister at home, and she has disgraced the family of O'Shea, an auld anshient family—an' driven me to drink!"

"How was that, O'Shea?" queried the colonel.

"Well sur, I am almost ashamed to tell you ; but after all the pains I have tuk wid her (he hadn't a sister at all), I got this letter (pulling it out) and be the mortal, sur, *she's married a tinker, and disgraced the descendant of the Great O'Shea's.*

Martin made a graceful *congé*. With the *Vicar of Wakefield*, we may say, "we do not know whether there was more wit, but there certainly was more laughing than usual."



## THE GAY RECRUIT.

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### CHAPTER XIII.

A VISIT was lately paid by the present writer to Barrackpore, where he had an opportunity, accompanied by the old lancer, who belonged, as has been said, to one of the most distinguished cavalry regiments which ever served in India—and a Victoria Cross man to boot—of seeing the interior economy of the artillery and infantry at that station, so far as barrack accommodation, messing, &c., &c., were concerned, and can vouch with the most perfect safety for the order, regularity, cleanliness, and comfort everywhere exhibited. Remarking especially upon the dinner set upon the barrack-room table for the men, the old lanceer took occasion to say that there was a wonderful difference between the barrack-room of 1876 and that of thirty years ago.

I heard a story once, he said, which is worth telling again, and which will show you that, be the circumstances exceptional or not, there is a great improvement, not only in the quality, quantity, &c., &c., of food given to soldiers as rations, but that ‘banyan days’ and scarcity, as was occasionally the case long ago among the men of the service,

could never happen *now*. You see, he continued, even in my time, there were arrangements, so far as regarded the men's messing, &c., which were of a very unsatisfactory nature. Ten-pence *per diem* was the sum daily deducted from the private dragoon's pay for his rations and messing. When rations were cheap, a private dragoon could calculate upon drawing four-pence *per diem* clear, and let four-pence *per diem* go to clear his debt, if he was in debt. If not in debt, and his kit complete, his drawing doubled the sum named. But when the rations were high in price, and other provisions proportionally dear, the less of course the private dragoon drew. Sometimes the full amount of the ten-pence was expended, and a fraction over in very exceptional cases ; and then the amount drawn became of course less—that is six-pence per day was drawn on the highest pay (one shilling and four-pence a day)—I speak of men who had no ‘Good Conduct badges : if a man was slightly in debt, four-pence : if he were much in debt, two-pence : if he were (as often was the case) over head and ears, he might, as was a favorite expression then, ‘go squint’ for loose coppers to purchase extra bread, tobacco, &c., &c. It was a beggarly account of empty boxes for *that unlucky wight*.

Well, sir, in Newbridge, in the County Kildare, in 1846 and the spring of 1847, the price of all

kinds of provisions was very high. The potatoe crop had entirely failed all over Ireland, and in parts of England and Scotland too, and the price of the soldiers' rations ruled as high then, and higher, than it has ever done since ; and the consequence was that the private soldier who was in debt, whether from his own carelessness, as is almost always the case, or from misfortune, which is sometimes the case, came to great grief. The price of the pound of bread and three-quarters of a pound of meat daily made a great hole in the poor dragoon's ten-pence, and the other articles composing the 'messing' swallowed it up completely. The regiment to which I allude had had a long march (at an unusual time for marching) right across England, and an embarkation at Liverpool, the heavy baggage having gone from a port in one of the Eastern Counties.

Now, a long march in those days meant a heavy blow and great discouragement to a private dragoon's kit; and as a measure of precaution even the most careful were put on what was called 'short pay,' for no colonel cares to see much debt in a troop, and the captain (excited thereunto by his troop sergeant-major) takes care to prevent it. Well, sir, these were 'banyan days' for the troopers. The old hands got on well enough, but the recruits were sorely tried ; and 'short commons,'

unless other funds could be found beside the bare pay, was the order of the day.

Among these recruits there was one named Farrell, a careful, yet merry and wise young fellow, who had got on capitally for his time in the regiment. He had behaved well ; was careful of his horse, kit, and accoutrements ; and was or had been as jolly as a sandboy, until he found himself on the edge of the great Curragh, with little to eat and scant chance of getting more. A regimental jacket and overalls belonging to this youth had formed part of the contents of a store-box (portion of the heavy baggage) which accidentally fell into the sea at Harwich, the contents of which were completely destroyed by the immersion, and poor Farrell had to find fresh garments (at his own expense and at the cost of a couple of pounds), which left him a long way on the debit side of his account in the troop ledger. Farrell was a great favorite in his troop : he was willing and obliging, had gained the esteem of the old hands, and, having attracted the attention of the officers and non-commissioned officers of his troop, was getting on famously. But the 'short commons' were too much for him, and he cast about for some means of raising 'the wind, as he was short of tobacco and grub, and knew that he would have some difficulty in finding means to supply the want of either ; for he had many

companions in misfortune, and all their applications for an increase of pay had been met by the sergeant-major with a reference to the acquittance-roll of the previous month, where their debt stood at so much, and *that* must be wiped off.

The Christmas of 1846 was approaching, and as the young fellows crouched round the turf fire in the barrack-room, converting themselves into a committee of ways and means whereby they sought in vain to see their way out of their straits, they thought it the blackest Christmas time they had ever experienced, and ne'er a ray to brighten it seemed near them.

'Anyhow,' said Farrell, 'I'll make a dash at the sergeant-major. To-morrow will be Christmas-eve, an' av he does not give us half a crown ache to put over the Chrismiss—he's no Tipperary man'! 'Be gorra,' concluded Farrell, 'all we have left us to do now is to divert the hunger off us—an' I'll make him laugh at any rate.'

The following morning after stables Farrell knocked the solitary, single, conventional knock at the sergeant-major's room door.

'Come in,' said that functionary.

Enter Farrell.

'Well, Farrell, what is it?' [The sergeant-major was allocating the troop pay into squads, and there were gold and silver coins and fresh bank notes on his

writing desk, at which poor Farrell looked wistfully.]

'Av ye please,' said Farrell, 'this is Chrismiss eve.'

'I know that,' said the sergeant-major. 'What then?'

'What then, is it?' asked Farrell. "'Tis the poor Chrismiss, an' our stomaks thinkin' that our throat is cut, we get so little to ate! Lind us half a crown a man, sur, us recruits, till we put over Chrismiss!'

'Half a crown!' shouted he of the stripes.

'Be off; thirty shillings—some of ye more—in debt, and half a crown! Be off wid ye.'

So Farrell departed, but in a short time he returned with an enclosure in his hand. He undid the cover (a regimental towel), and displayed to the astonished gaze of the sergeant-major a knife, fork, and spoon in a high state of polish.

'Sur,' said Farrell, an expression of the utmost gravity pervading his countenance, and not a muscle moving, 'wud ye be kind enuff to take them things into store, for they're only an incumbrance; an' the next time ye go to Dublin, bring a dentist out wid ye an' *get all our teeth drawn, since we have no further occashin for them!*' The sergeant-major was ultimately compelled to break out into a loud guffaw, and at mid-day explained to his captain and subalterns, amid much laughter, Farrell's request, which led to an amelioration in the condition of all the recruits in the troop for the festive occasion at all events.

## THE DESERTER.

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### CHAPTER XIV.

RETURNING from Barrackpore in the train, I happened to remark to my V. C. friend that I had seen a paragraph in a paper that morning to the effect that a man had deserted from his detachment at Darjeeling, and that he had in his possession his arms, accoutrements and ammunition ; from which we inferred that he must be of a sporting disposition, and in all probability would turn up in a day or two, having only gone on a shooting excursion.

" Likely enough," said my friend. " Desertions of that kind are rare in this country ; but I heard of an enterprising youth having deserted from the regiment to which I belonged at home, *horse* and all complete."

" How did that happen," I asked.

" In this wise," said my friend :—" The regiment was stationed in what is called a head-quarter station, that is, in direct communication with the Horse Guards. There are not many of them : four, I think—Canterbury, Dorchester, Ipswich, and Hounslow. Which of the places it was I forget, for it was before my day, although the memory of the daring feat was still green in the memory of many

of the old soldiers when I joined. The man, on a fine afternoon, dressed himself in his full uniform, saddled his horse in review order, drew his sword, and boldly rode out of the barrack-gate, the sentry ‘forming up’ to him as he passed. He, the sentry, was under the impression that the man was proceeding as an orderly on despatch duty, and took no further notice of him. But great was the consternation in the troop, and in the regiment at evening stable hour, when it was found that the man had taken ‘French leave,’ and included his quadruped in the furlough! There was immediate pursuit made, and the usual notices scattered far and wide in the *Hue and Cry*; but all efforts to trace man and horse were abortive, and the daring escapade was nearly forgotten, when, in a country town in the north of England, a sharp recruiting-sergeant picked the man up as a deserter from *some* corps, without knowing which in particular, and he confessed that he was the man who had deserted—horse, kit and all. Duly forwarded to the regiment, he was tried by a district court-martial, sentenced to be marked with the letter ‘D.,’ to undergo 184 days’ imprisonment with hard labor, and to ‘be put under stoppages not exceeding two-thirds of his daily pay, until the deficiencies in the matter of horse, appointments, accoutrements, and regimental necessaries were made good.’

There was a stiffener for you ! The marking was nothing to signify. The 184 days would soon slip past. But the stoppages ! The price of the horse (regulation) was £30 ; the appointments at least £5 ; the accoutrements and necessaries £5 more : that gave £40, and the daily pay, from which not less than two-thirds were to be deducted, was—one shilling and four pence ! How many years it would take to wipe *that* off the slate, was a matter of no small wonderment to the ‘ bould sojer-boy.’

Well, the ‘ D.’ was marked and the imprisonment over, and the man joined his troop, took to soldiering like a trump as he was, and in six months was gaining back the respect and good name he had forfeited, when one fine day he rather astonished the sergeant-major of his troop, by saying that he wished the captain would take him before the commanding officer, as he wanted to ask for a fortnight’s leave. The sergeant-major of course spoke to the captain ; said that the man was working well ; had been in no trouble since he had returned ; and the leave, he thought, might safely be granted.

Brought before the colonel, the man said that previous to his enlistment he had quarrelled with his family, who were respectable ; that he had a child whom he had not seen for a year and a half ; that he had written to his father explaining how he was situated, how deeply he was in debt, the bitter

prospect before him, and urging that he should at least pay his debt, if he did not advance him as much money as would both pay that and purchase his discharge. He referred to his captain as to his conduct during the past six months, became quite affecting over his paternal and parental feelings, and succeeded in obtaining 15 days' leave.

He returned before his leave expired. About a week after he left he rode into the barrack-yard on as natty a bit of horseflesh as ever dragoon sat on ! He timed his arrival as midday stables were dismissed, and the 'chief' and his captains and subs were chatting over matters regimental.

He rode straight to the colonel, dismounted, led the horse by the bridle, and said he hoped it would be accepted in lieu of the one he had taken with him to Bohemia ! The animal was worth a dozen of the old 'garran' he had taken away !

The colonel said the horse was much too good for a trooper : he would make a capital charger. Some of the officers might buy him.

The man said he had seen his father, been reconciled to him, and had got this horse from him on the condition that he should give it to his commanding officer instead of the one he had annexed. The colonel's advice was to sell the horse, to pay his debt, and thus be able to soldier in comfort. The man agreed. A young sprig of nobility wanting

a charger bid a long price for the horse, bought him, and paid the money. The dragoon paid his debt, and applied for his discharge, tendering the purchase-money, £30. Application was made, as a special case, to the Horse Guards to dispense with the usual interregnum between the application and the assembly of a board to 'verify and record the services' of the man to be discharged. The dispensation was granted, and in the course of a day or two the man left the barracks with his parchment certificate in his pocket, having 'won golden opinions' from all kinds of soldiers by his liberality and good fellowship."

"And the horse?" asked I.

"Oh! the horse! Yes," said my friend, "he left too in a few days afterwards *in custody of an officer from Scotland Yard*. The horse, sir, had been stolen in Yorkshire, and had been traced to the regiment."

"Was the man ever caught?"

"The devil a catch," answered the old man. "Who would apprehend a man as a deserter in those days with a parchment certificate in his pocket?"



## THE FATIGUE-PARTY.

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### CHAPTER XV.

We had many a chat, had the old lancer and your humble servant, regarding the “queer cards” our reminiscences pointed to as having been seen in the service, and the many curious actions, or rather antics, these characters were in the habit of performing. And while talking over the entire change in the routine of duty in India, in time of peace, compared with that at Home, my friend remarked, “No hard rubs, no disagreeable fatigues, and more rest than one well knows what to do with. These fatigue-duties now,” said he, “were in my time the cause of more rows, more grumbling (and a good deal of punishment too), than anything minor going. You know the dodges that used to be resorted to, to get rid of these unpleasantnesses, and there were some cards in the regiment, ‘fool-rogues’ they used to be called, who, by apparent simplicity, but real roguery, contrived either to evade fatigue-duties altogether, or to perform some cantrip in the execution of the duty, which effectually prevented them being detailed again, unless there was an absolute necessity. I remember once warning an old hand to move an officer’s baggage in Dundalk, when the regiment was

about to march to Dublin. He was a growling old beggar, only to be mollified by infinite quarts of beer (which some of the younger gentlemen who had a mind to have their belongings carefully lifted and set down used to dispense to the fatigue-parties), and his first enquiry of the orderly corporal was, 'Is there any beer afloat?' The corporal shook his head, 'No beer, Chatterton. This is the colonel's baggage.' 'Oh!' said Chatterton, 'colonel's is it? Then we'll give it a rough passage.' Unluckily for the man the commanding officer was behind, and overheard him. 'Rough passage,' said he? 'Corporal, put that man in the guard-room, and we will see what kind of a passage he will have when I bring him before the major in the morning.' And I believe poor Chatterton *did* get a somewhat rough passage. But the best story I ever heard of a fatigue-party was told me by an old chum of mine belonging to the 52nd. His name was Grady, and he was killed before Delhi, poor fellow. It appeared that when he was a recruit (I am speaking of many years ago), the regiment was quartered at Enniskillen. The officers of the 52nd, as befitted so crack a corps, were a hospitable, jolly, dinner-giving, ball-attending lot, from the commanding officer down to the last joined ensign, and upon a certain occasion they gave a ball and supper to all the notabilities of the country round. Near and

far contributed their quota of ‘fair women and brave men;’ the affair was a most brilliant success, and the company broke up, long after the day had dawned, and left the scene of festivity in a state of the most admired disorder, far beyond the power of the usual exertions of the mess-sergeant and his assistants to rectify in time for the appearance of the officers in the ante-room and mess-room to a late breakfast. So fatigue-men were indented for from the different companies, and after the early breakfast of the men, the men were warned, paraded, and marched to the scene of their duties. Grady was one, and his comrade, Barney Hennessy, the other, and they were *bond file—arcades ambo!* Both wags, both heedless young fellows, who would do anything for a ‘lark.’ They received their instructions from the lady who had charge of the officers’ mess (a widow with handsome daughters), and it appeared that they were to wash dishes, silver, cutlery, &c., &c. There were two large tubs provided, full of hot and cold water, and into these the dishes, &c., were to be put—first into one, then into another, then wiped and put away. Working away, and chatting gaily as they worked, the time slipped on, and the sound of the dinner-bugle was heard as they were nearly finished. They acquainted—or at least Grady did, for he was the spokesman—the lady that they were going to dinner. Very

well ; they could go, but must return again after. ‘Very well, ma’am,’ said Grady, ‘you’ll excuse me for minshining it, but it’s very *dry* work this, although there’s plenty of water about !’

The lady did not know what Grady meant, but he ‘incinsed her,’ as he called it. ‘We have been workin’ hard, an’ would wish to drink yer health before we go to dinner.’

Dear ! Never heard of such impudence ! Sent on fatigue-duty, and want beer ! Had a great mind to have Grady put in the guard-room !

‘Ah ! now,’ said Grady, with affected humility, but with a glance of mischief at the dame, ‘don’t get us put in the guard-room, av ye plase. Never mind the beer ; we didn’t mane any harm. Sure we’re ignorant craytures, an’ don’t know any better. Let us off this time, ma’am, an’ God spare ye to yer fine childer ! Come on, Barney, let’s go to the canteen and get a pint, and our dinner. We’ll be back at 2 o’clock ma’am, an’ good day to ye.’ And the pair vanished.

They returned at the appointed time, fully determined that whatever was to be done should be done with the addition of some trick, not yet developed, to be played upon the lady with the handsome daughters who had been so stingy with her beer. The water tubs with their contents were still *in statu quo*, with an addition of a fine greasy scum of about

an inch thick floating on the surface of the water in each. Their arrival was duly reported, and ‘a slip of a girl’ made her appearance, carrying a large clothes basket full of ladies’ boots and shoes ; dancing, walking, dress, all sizes, kinds and denominations : black boots, white, bronze, buff, brown, all colours, and shoes ‘ditto to Mr. Pitt !’ This ‘slip of a girl’ was followed by her mistress, who told her to put the basket down, and, pointing to the contents, told Grady ‘to clean *them* !’ with which she gathered her skirts round her, and departed.

Grady stared at the basket and its contents—at Barney Hennessy—at any and everything in fact ; scratching his head the while with an air of the most profound perplexity. At length he caught what must have been a brilliant idea, for his face brightened wonderfully.

‘Barney,’ he said.

‘Aye,’ said Barney.

‘We’re to clane *them* ?’

‘So she said,’ said Barney, over whose face—perhaps a reflection from Grady’s—a smile was also stealing.

‘Two waters,’ said Grady.

‘Aye, faith,’ said Barney.

‘Well,’ said Grady, ‘I suppose we must clane *them* by the same process as we claned the dishes, and we’ll see how she likes the look of them !’ Suiting the action to the word, he emptied the entire contents

of the basket into one of the tubs, gave them a thorough soaking, then deliberately transferred the boots and shoes to the other tub, from which Barney fished them one by one, and commenced 'drying' them with a duster.

While they were engaged in this operation, my lady made her appearance again, this time carrying in her own fair hands a small pile of plates, cutlery, &c., on which she had intended the 'fatigue-men' to operate. Words cannot express the rage, mortification, and dismay of the lady ! She let all the plates, knives, forks, spoons, &c., fall. She 'screeched,' she 'raised the devil generally,' as Grady said : and the finale was that the pair of interesting youths were conveyed to the guard-room to abide the consequences of 'having wilfully destroyed certain,' &c., &c. They made themselves comfortable, and the guard as well as the guarded had a hearty laugh at Grady's new idea of cleaning boots and shoes.

In the 'dry-room,' as it was called, there was a grating through which the barrack-yard could be seen, and at this Grady stationed himself, whistling the 'Wind that shuk the Barley,' 'Tatther Jack Walsh,' 'Paudeen Roo,' or some 'rale auld Irish chune,' to beguile the time. As he whistled, the major in command walked in at the gate, and heard the bird in its cage.

' 'Sergeant of the guard !'

‘Sur!’ said the sergeant.

‘Who have you there?’ pointing to the dry-room.

‘Grady and Hennessy, sur.’

‘I am going to the orderly room; bring ‘em up.’

‘Yes, sur,’ said the sergeant, and in a very short space of time a file of the guard, the corporal thereof, and Messrs. Grady and Hennessy were standing in front of the major, who demanded the nature of the offence committed. The only other officer present was the adjutant, and he explained that the men were confined for having wilfully destroyed boots and shoes, the property of So-and-So, valued at £3-18-4.

‘The major looked at Grady (who was a favourite of his, as indeed he was of every one’s), and asked how the matter occurred.

‘Sur,’ said Grady, ‘av ye let me tell me own story, an’ not lave any one interrup’ me till I’m done. This poor boy, sur, pointing to Hennessy, has nothin’ to do wid it. Sur, it is me! I’ll tell ye the God’s truth’.

‘Very well,’ said the major, ‘go on!’

Grady related the story of the dish-washing—carefully keeping back the episode of having been refused the beer—and brought his tale down to the period of the ‘slip of a girl’ bringing the boots and shoes to be cleaned. ‘When we wint in the mornin’, sur, we wor tould to put iviry thing in two

waters, an' then wipe thim dry, an' we done it ; didn't we Barney ?'

Barney nodded.

'An,' sur,' continued Grady, getting pathetic on the subject, 'I think we are sufferin' now for obadynance of orders.'

The major laughed ; he enquired from the adjutant how the men happened to be sent on such a fatigue-duty. That gentleman referred to the regimental sergeant-major, who said that they had been indented for by the mess-sergeant.

The major was of opinion that he shouldn't have his men employed on such duties ; that provision should be made for extra work by the caterer for the mess ; and if the lady who held that position had really had articles destroyed to the amount stated, why let the person who sent the men there, and who had acted, wrongly perhaps, on misconception of instructions, let him pay for the shoes.

' See now,' said Grady, ' may I niver !

' Silence, sir,' roared the sergeant-major.

' Well Grady,' said the major ' What were you about to say ?'

' Why then, sur,' said Grady, ' I niver seen worse shoes than thim in Cuffe Street in Dublin (and that's where the hoigth av bad shoes is to be seen) !'

'Good or bad,' said the major, 'let the mess-sergeant pay for them. Release these men—fall away the guard!'

Said Grady to Barney, as they leisurely strolled to the canteen after being released, 'we won't be sent to the mess in a hurry again, Barney, on fatigue; *and she was foolish not to give us the beer.*'

'Bad luck to her,' said Barney.

'Amin!' said Grady, 'whether you're jokin' or not.'

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## L A R R Y   R O O K.

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### CHAPTER XVI.

“ You tell me,” said the old lancer “ of your fellows making light of the guard-room, but we had a man in the distinguished rig-i-ment I served in, who abhorred nothing so much as the sight of the main-guard, and in whose eyes the old figure-of-eight style of handcuff, provided to assist in having a boisterous, unruly or drunken man taken there, acted as a red rag acts on a bull. He was a most extraordinary character, was Lawrence Crow, of Clonmel, in the County of Tipperary, in that part of Great Britain and Ireland called Ireland. And in his troop, and indeed all over the regiment, as soldiers are fond of abbreviations *and* transliterations (no disrespect to Dr. Hunter, and wishing he would send us a presentation copy of his book to help us in our spelling the language in “stray leaves,” without having any other reason why than that ‘it comes handy’), he was universally known as ‘Larry Rook,’ unless among the educated and would-be witty non-commissioned officers who called him ‘Lallah Rookh,’ a term of which he was not a little proud. Whether he understood that the name was applied in derision, or to ‘take a rise’ out of him, is beside the question.

Larry remained in blissful ignorance. He was a Jack of all trades. To the uninitiated I may say that such a man is a man that can do almost anything. He was a mighty tailor before all men, could ply the needle deftly, and if need were could fashion all his clothing, socks, and that indescribable garment, the feminine whereof is *chemisette*, into the bargain ! Tailoring being slack, Larry would devote himself to the knitting-needles, in the use of which he was an adept. When the regimental clothing was being made up, he worked in the tailors' shop ; if the saddler sergeant had extra work and wanted an extra hand, Larry Crow was the man ; did 'the clink of hammer closing rivets up' sound from the armourer's anvils, depend upon it Larry was one of the strikers ! He was a carpenter, too, and gave assistance in that department ; and notwithstanding his thousand-and-one avocations it is worthy of remark that Larry's patch was the best kept of any in the soldiers' garden. There was a legend in the regiment that on an occasion in an up-country station, and during the rains, the priest's house fell in, and that there and then Larry Crow did exhibit such architectural powers, theoretical and practical, in its reconstruction, as put contractors to shame, and smote the Public Works Department with dismay ! That may be a fable, but it was religiously believed in. The most powerful man, in a troop where all were powerful, as is often

the case, he was the most peaceful *when sober*; but when he had the ‘laste taste in life’ as he called it, in him, he was a devil incarnate—and when it was known that Larry was ‘for the clink,’ (that is, the cells) the whole squad, and sometimes the whole troop had to ‘stand by’ to take him there, as so sure as he hit a fellow who attempted to take him, that man went down, as a comrade expressed it, like the down-fall av Loodhiana barrik ! And he had a fashion, too, of tearing the clothes off his assailants, which he had to make good when released, so that it was a somewhat expensive amusement for Master Larry to be sent to the guard-room. Another peculiarity which distinguished him was (when sober) he had never been known to contradict any one, but invariably agreeing with them whether for or against his own convictions, if he had any ; and yet more, his practice of calling any one whose Christian name or surname he did not know—and indeed whether he knew it or not “Jim, boy,” was irresistibly ludicrous. *Par exemple* the following dialogue between Larry and a comrade from “the one place,” whose name was really Phelim O’Dowd, but which Larry chose should be ‘Jim boy,’ altho’ well he knew to the contrary :—

‘Morrow, Larry !’

‘Morrow, boy; morrow, Jim boy.’

‘Fine day, Larry !’

' Right boy ; right, Jim boy.'

' The hate is killin', Larry !'

Right Jim, killin' boy,'

I think we'll have rain, Larry.

' Rain ? right Jim ; right boy.'

' But there's no sign av id, Larry.'

' No indeed, Jim boy, sorree sign.'

' But ye sed just now there *was* Larry, so yere wrong.'

' Of coarse I am boy, right boy—wrong Jim boy.'

' Donovan said ye would give me a dram, Larry.'

' Did he now, Jim boy ? Well, I suppose, I will, boy.

Come on, Jim boy !'

' Don't mind the skut,' Donovan broke in, ' I told him you *wouldn't* give him one.' ' Right boy—right Jim,' said Larry walking off. ' I won't give him one boy—no, no, Jim boy,—won't give him half a one.' So this peculiarity soldiered away, living entirely on his good-looking sixteen pence a day, and the proceeds of a conduct badge which he was ever and again losing and having restored. For all the money earned by Larry—and it was no insignificant sum—from the multifarious nature of his capabilities and his willingness to oblige any one brought him no end of employers, all his earnings were scrupulously set aside, handed at the end of the month to the troop sergeant-major, who in due course remitted them to poor Larry's

old bed-ridden mother who lived at Two-mile-bridge on the road from Clonmel to Carrick-upon-Suir. The love for the ‘auld mother’ burned with as sacred a fire within the breast of that oddity as it ever did in that of the fairest and the most serene daughter, or the manliest and the bravest son that ever trod the earth—and it was no small pride that swelled Larry’s heart at the end of every month, when, little canvas bag in hand, he went to the sergeant-major.

‘Well, Larry?’

Yes, boy, Jim boy—beg pardon—yes—there it is, ‘send it home.’

‘How much, Larry?’

‘Yes, boy, that’s it Jim boy ; beg pardon—I didn’t count it.’

‘The auld address, Larry?’

Yes, boy. ‘Two-mile-bridge, Jim boy.’

‘All right, Larry—I’ll send you the letter to post yourself.’

‘Be gorra that’s grate, boy ; right Jim boy ; right,’ and Larry marches off to the canteen, to have his glass ‘av by'r lady’—more ! Universally liked, as well for his handiness as for his invariable good nature, and for the total absence of bumpitiousness on the part of the man who had the strength of a giant and used it like a pygmy, Larry’s appearance at the convivial ren-

dezvous was the signal for the gathering of all his troop mates, and friends from other troops, who came to share their modest glass or quart with Larry Rook ! The contrarieties they made him confess to ; the corners into which they pushed him and fixed him until by sheer good-humour he extricated himself, (or more frequently a friend did) from the pits himself had dug—caused boundless and uproarious laughter, in which Larry's shout was the loudest of the loud. He never lost his temper unless he was ordered to the guard-room, and then—‘ stand clear of the cable !’ It chanced that previous to the occasion I am about to describe to you, Larry had been rather unfortunate with his ‘ laste taste in life,’ or, ‘ just as much me dear, as would cover the bottom of a glass.’ He had been three times with a red chalk (drunkenness) before the commanding officer, and that dignitary had impressively warned ‘ Jim, boy, right boy,’ that the next time he made his appearance in the orderly-room for a similar offence, if within the year, that he would assuredly try him by a regimental court-martial for habitual drunkenness. ‘ You are a good man, Crow, no better ;’ said the old man, ‘ you are a brave soldier, and a good son—for the man who is a good son must needs be a good soldier, *but* ’ (ah me ! that *but* !) that vice which has been killing you by inches (‘ right boy, right Jim

boy,' Larry said to himself) must be eradicated—and if you come here again within the next (so many) months—you know what you may expect. I am determined to put an end to this hideous evil in my regiment if I can. You and I, Crow, have been together in many a stricken field, and have jostled death as closely as we ever will until our dying day ; but a more insidious foe you never met in the hardest day's fight you ever had, Crow ! (Right, boy ; right Jim, boy, Larry again muttered to himself.) So look out ! go ! there are already two marks against you—this is third ; come again, and—you know I keep my word, Crow ! (Right Jim, boy ; right boy—poor Larry muttered.) And he stumbled out of the room. He kept steady for time only, when it was seen that Larry was evidently on the wing ; the letter with the money had gone to the old mother ; he had his 'clearance' in his pocket, there was plenty of money—lashin's he called it—about, and to every one who asked him for a treat—or to any one who proffered it—'right boy ; right Jim boy !' was the response until it became apparent to all that Larry—by hook or by crook, must rest his weary bones that night, as Sergeant Armstrong used to say 'in a bigger house than ivir his father built for him.' But to get him there ! That was the momentous question. 'I was regimental orderly corporal' said the old lancer 'and Larry came staggering

into the bungalow, as I was making my report out. I saw what was in the wind and took no notice—a hint of the guard-room as I have before said, and Larry would have ‘raised the wild devil without!’ He went straight (as he could) to his cot.’

‘Evenin’ Larry,’ said I.

‘Evenin’ boy, Jim boy; I’ll have a snooze, boy; right boy—Jim boy.’

He lighted his pipe and smoked, but ‘not a wink was upon him,’ and the orderly sergeant of the troop came quietly in the verandah, and looking in through one of the openings beckoned me out. He said that the sergeant-major had ordered Crow to the cells, desired me to go for a pair of handcuffs, and warn half-a-dozen of the strongest men in the troop to take him there. And he continued ‘you take charge of the escort.’ In vain I pleaded regimental duty—this was troop duty, ‘and you remember’ said the sergeant ‘what the son told the father in Woolwich, when he was ordered to put him in the guard-room for being tight’—‘duty must be done, father, put on your jacket and I’ll see you safe in the corner shop (a slang name for the place of confinement) myself.’

Here was I in for as nice a bit of disagreeable duty as mortal man ever performed or was warned for; I told off the escort, and was about to start for the handcuffs when I was accosted very quietly

by a cockney, as daring and as smart a dragoon as ever jingled spur.

'Corporal' said he 'you won't want the handcuffs for Larry to-night ; you'll get him to the guard-room without—if you take my advice.'

'As how?' said I.

'Now,' said Taylor, 'I sleep next cot to Larry ; he and I are fast friends and chums. Let me go and 'act the goat' (another slang term for playing monkey tricks) ; I'll pretend to be drunk ; you warn the escort to take *me* off ; put the handcuffs on *me*, and warn Larry to take my bed to the cells, and *when we get him there I'll slip out and he'll slip in, and the thing is done, sir!* He has been taking so much that he'll thrash the troop, and leave not a whole shirt for kit inspection. My plan is the best, the safest, and the quietest—here goes !'

I went for the handcuffs and returning found Taylor roaring out 'Willikin's and his Din-er' and what he called 'Shamming Abraham' properly ! Larry—himself miraculously screwed—was enjoining quietness upon Taylor—'right boy, Jim boy ; see now, quiet boy—Jim boy, here's the corporal.'

'What's all this,' said I.

'Nothing at all,' corporal, said Taylor, 'I have been at the Canterbury and all over and Willikin's—and—his din-e-a-r-ah !' With that he rolled over, and pretended to go fast asleep.

I gave the handcuffs to one of the escort who had been warned to take Larry, and told him to put them on Taylor which he did—that artful dodger simulating sleep amazingly. But the censure of all beholders reached its climax when I said to Larry Crow ‘take Taylor’s bed to the guard-room.’

‘Right ; boy right, Jim boy ; wrong boy—my own bed I’ll take boy, Jim boy. Let him be till you wake him up. *I’ll get his bed when I come back boy, Jim boy. My own bed boy. Right boy.*’ So Larry made a bundle of his mattress and pillow and taking it under his arm was ready to start for the guard-room with his bed for Taylor !

That worthy was not very hard to rouse, and after some little demur and much expression of indignation at having been, as he phrased it, taken advantage of in his sleep and ‘*hancuffed*,’ the whole party got under-weigh for the port to which poor Crow, as he himself said afterwards ‘unbeknownst’ was bound.

On the way Larry was profuse in his condolences with Taylor. ‘Poor boy, right Jim boy. No burying place boy ; three or four days’ drill Jim boy, right boy. I’ve been there myself boy. Jim boy, but it was right boy ; you’ll be right boy, Jim boy.’

So he talked as we went, and the escort had no small trouble to preserve the necessary gravity usual

upon so solemn an occasion. The guard-room reached, we bade the sergeant good evening ; said we had brought a lodger, and that Larry Crow had volunteered to lend the man who was to remain *perdu* his bed for the night.

I winked at the sergeant, and the sergeant ‘tumbled to it,’ and winked at me !

Would Larry take the bed into the inside cell ?

‘Right boy ; Jim boy !’ And in he went—I slipped gently behind him, and while he was looking for the softest plank on the guard-bed I gently closed the door—pushed the great bolt from outside and there was my bold Larry high *and* dry and not a word about it.

No ‘spilling,’ (that was his phrase for downing a fellow) ; no rending of garments ; no shedding of blood.

I took the handcuffs off Taylor who suddenly became sober, and thinking the whole affair a joke, Crow took the matter very easily until assured by the sergeant that he really was a prisoner, and then the efforts he made to shake the cell-door open were something superhuman.

But the carpenter and the locksmith were too many for Larry, and he finally went to sleep ‘Right boy, Jim boy ’ being his last-heard ejaculation.

Reporting the success of our scheme to the sergeant-major, who was highly delighted at the way

in which Larry had walked into the trap, I was told to explain the circumstance to the captain in the morning, and he would do what he could to save Larry from a court-martial.

The captain laughed heartily—took the crime to the colonel and obtained permission to deal with the case himself, and sent me to the guard-room to bring Larry before him.

Crow was rather inclined to sulk in the first instance. I tried the ‘auld woman,’ ‘come Crow,’ said I, the captain wants you,

‘Right boy, Jim boy ; a dodge boy—too bad, Jim boy.’

‘Not a bit, Larry.’ You remember what the colonel said the last time ? And what would the ‘auld mother’ do *then*, Larry ?

‘Right boy, Jim boy ! What *would* the auld woman do then boy ! Thank you boy, Jim boy ; God bless you boy !’

‘Come along to the captain,’ said I.

Rather shame-faced was Larry as he faced the ‘skipper,’ as we used to call him.

‘Well, Crow.’

‘Right boy, pardon sur, said Larry.

In it again, eh ?

‘Right—Ji—sir,—walked into it begorra ! *Like a slaughter to a lamb boy.* Beg pardon, sur. I’ve often heerd av a man bein ‘pud in ; an ’ kicked

in ; an' pitched in ; but, right—sur—Jim—sur, beg pardon, sur—for a man to walk in wid his beddin' under his arrum an' luk fur the softest plank he could pick for a comrade, an' then have to shlape on id till mornin'—himself—is—I'm 'not much av a skolor sur, but right sur—right Ji—but *I think it is uncontestable !*'

'I think so too' said the 'skipper' ; 'go to your stable, and thank the corporal here that you have a long day yet for the fourth chalk, Crow.'

'Sur,' said Larry, (the longest speech he was ever known to make connectedly) 'there will be more nor four an' twinty hours on the twenty-sukkund av June, an' that's the longest day in the year when I confine meself agin !'

And that, said the old lancer, is how Larry Crow put himself in the guard-room !



## P O O R   S L A P.

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### CHAPTER XVII.

“ SLAP this—Slap that ; Slap, you’re for guard ; Slap, you’re for riding school ; Slap, you’re for fatigue ; Slap, you’re for drill ! Slap for every thing ! Lay out your kit, Slap ! Inspection of saddlery to-day, Slap !” Clean your sword and belts, Slap. You’re for the guard-room, Slap !” “ Why the devil ! ” groaned the man in question, for the words were spoken by him in a peevish, irritated tone, “ why the devil don’t they get a Slap of their own, and make fun av him, and lave me rest in peace ! ”

He was sitting quietly on his cot in the barrack-room, ruminating as he scrubbed and rubbed away at his accoutrements ; addressed himself to no one in particular (for the whole squad were there and listening, too), but seemed to be communing with himself, and, as is the wont of men who hold more frequent converse with their own thoughts than with other men, was “ thinking aloud.” And truth to tell, it was a great practice of his ; and with the cunning of a man “ slightly touched”—he had had a stroke of the sun—he made such practice an excuse for getting out of scrapes which this habit of thinking

aloud at “inconvenient saysons” occasionally led him into.

“What are you grumbling at now, Slap?” one of the listeners asked him—“what ever *are* you grumbling at?”

“There, now,” said Slap, “you’ll call Slap a grumbler next, as if he hadn’t enough to answer for already.”

“And what are you doing *but* grumbling;” was the retort; “you are constantly grumbling!”

“Then why don’t they lave me alone; why do they torment me?”

“They don’t torment you, as you call it; do as your comrades do, and no one will grumble; every man in the troop has his kit laid out but you—for yours is still in your box.”

“Are you sure of that me flower?” asked Slap.

“Slap,” said the sergeant who had been talking to him, “remember who you speak to; lay out your kit at once, sir? *At once*; you hear, Slap?”

Slap, *perforce*, set to work to lay his kit out for inspection. It was no easy task, for the article the poor fellow wanted *first* was what was found *last*, and when he had scarcely finished the task which to the others was so simple, every thing being in its proper place, the troop officer was in the room and standing looking at Slap’s kit; and the various articles of which it was composed looked as rumpled

and muggy as if they had not passed through the hands of a dhoby since they left the troop-stores !

It was a saying in the troop when any article was found on the floor of the room, that it had been found "on Slap's shelf,"—which, as a rule, reached from his bed to the door !

And in these circumstances the reader who is *au fait* in these small matters, will readily understand that Slap's kit was not pleasant to look upon, much less to inspect—and that, in addition, it was very far from being complete.

"Where are your warm socks, Slap?" asked the young officer.

"Ah!" said Slap, "I thought as much! I was sure you'd say where's you're warm socks, Slap! see now," he said "ye didn't ax him (pointing to the man next to him) where *his* warm socks were!"

The young gentleman smiled, and turning to the man asked where his warm socks were. The man was accordingly about to produce them from his box, when he was stopped by the officer, who told him not to mind, and turning to Slap, he said, "now then Slap, where are *yours*?"

"In the box, sir," said Slap, but he made no move to show them.

"Let me see them," said the officer.

"You didn't want to see *his*," said Slap. "You only want to see Slap's!" Here he dived into the

box and fished out what had originally been socks, but the store vocabulary would have been extensive indeed for articles so non-descript to have found a name there ! They were fragments of what had been, and the expectant result was speedily made known to him by the officer desiring the troop sergeant-major to " put Slap down for socks."

" He's already on an anna a day, sir," said the sergeant-major.

" Can't help it," said the officer, " he must have socks and take care of them when he has them. Put up your kits men now, I've seen Slap's ! "

And Slap's kit was relegated to his box. With an amount of " chin music " spoken rather than sung *sotto voce* anathematizing all and sundry.

As has been said, the poor fellow had received a touch of the sun, and was really very far gone, although he was suspected of malingering for the purpose of obtaining his discharge, and his troopers treated him for a time as if he was a rogue and not a fool, and no end of practical jokes were played upon the unfortunate wight in consequence.

There was only one in the troop who really thought the man " a little M you know," and that was the captain ; so convinced was he that poor Slap was an object for commiseration and not for punishment that he continually ' admonished' instead of punishing him ; and at length it became evi-

dent, even to the medical men (who are slow at arriving at conclusions in such cases) that the man was insane. But at what pains and penalties to poor Slap did they arrive at this conclusion? How many boluses he had to swallow; how many blisters applied; how he was purged *and* pilled *and* bolused, Slap alone knew! And how many punishments, regimental and otherwise, inflicted and endured, it would be hard to compute!

But when the conclusion *was* arrived at, and he was treated for the complaint under which he really laboured, Slap had it all his own way. When a patient in hospital, the medico was particularly careful to enjoin the utmost attention being paid to Slap. Slap rather liked it than otherwise.

"Slap," said the surgeon, "what would you like for dinner to-day?"

"Will I get what I want, sir?"

"Certainly."

"Then, sir, I'll have oatmeal!"

The oatmeal was ordered, but it couldn't be procured just then.

"I knew," said the poor fellow, "Slap would get what he liked for dinner!"

"Would you like some wine, Slap?"

"Would I like it? will I get it?"

"How are you to-day, Slap?"

"Much *you* care how *I* am! lots indeed!"

There were daily occurrences interspersed with occasional complaints which had no earthly foundation.

The surgeon would pass on to the next patient (labouring under a similar ailment to poor Slap's in a worse degree), would harangue the medical man on the hardships entailed on him by his having to watch poor Slap !

" Do not," he (this patient) would implore the surgeon, " take any notice of Slap ! He is thoroughly mad, sir ; and believe me (here he got quite confidential) I really wish you would grant me my discharge, and let me go to my troop duty ! Guards and picquets are not half so hard, sir, *as watching that mad man here night and day !*"

Slap, however, was not quite so mad as the man who was said to be watching him ; and was allowed, being perfectly harmless, to wander about the hospital.

While he was there a female lunatic was also a patient, and Slap saved her from committing suicide. She had escaped from her ward-attendant, and was in the act of throwing herself into a well, when Slap who had followed her, divining her intention, seized her just in time to prevent her jumping in it. Slap escorted the poor thing to the hospital ; made her over to the female attendant, and soundly rated her for her carelessness in

allowing the “poor mad thing to be wandering about unattended.”

A very laughable circumstance occurred in connection with poor Slap while he was a patient in hospital at Meerut. On a certain fine Sunday evening the troops paraded for divine service, and their *route* to church led past the hospital. The commanding officer and his staff were in rear of the regiment, the band was playing a quick step, when suddenly the word of command was heard in stentorian tones. “Halt—h-a-l-t! front!” Then almost immediately afterwards—when every eye was strained in the direction from whence the voice proceeded—some one was heard to say in a general officerish manner. “Very well! Very well *indeed*, Colonel. Very good, men! Never saw it better done!” It was poor Slap, at whom the colonel shook his fist.

“March on! Colonel! march on, sir; a fine regiment you have there, sir! I shall not forget to report to head-quarters the accuracy of your field movements, and the excellence of your discipline!. A credit to all concerned, sir; and particularly to Lieutenant and Adjutant Slap! Take your men home, sir; do you hear? Very well! Very well indeed!”

“Poor fellow,” said the colonel and marched his men off.

Yet another circumstance remains to be recorded of poor Slap, which was the last we saw of him. The regiment was ordered on the Punjab campaign, and poor Slap was left behind for the purpose of being sent home, it being now proved beyond all semblance of doubt that it would be quite impossible to expect him to recover to such an extent as would enable him to return to his duty in this country. This arrangement did not suit Slap at all; he begged and prayed that he might be taken with the regiment and not left behind with a parcel of old women, but be sent where he could do his duty like a man and stop a bullet as well as the "doctor" who was (he said) the wisest man in the regiment. But the fiat had gone forth and poor Slap was left as originally ordered. Early one fine morning on their march towards the frontier, the regiment arrived at Loodianah. At ten o'clock all was still and hushed in camp—most of the men having a nap after their march, pitching camp, picketing horses, &c., when suddenly a general *hubbub* prevailed, and awaking from their light slumbers, the men rushed from their tents to the end of the lines to see "what was up," when behold! here was poor Slap in his hospital clothing ; leading a tired and jaded horse, and waving an old flannel cap over his head ! "Here I am boys !" he said, "I've come to see the fun with the regiment;

it was no use trying to stop behind with those old fogeys at the dépôt ! My heart was with you boys !” and here the poor fellow sank down exhausted. He had followed the regiment day by day, sleeping and eating where and how he could, until he overtook the troops.

It is useless to say that he was taken to the nearest tent and treated with the greatest kindness and every care taken of him until he was sent back to the dépôt in charge of a party of invalids for the purpose of being sent home.

He *was* sent home shortly afterwards and we lost sight of him from that time, but his name was never mentioned in the regiment unless coupled with the ejaculation “ Poor Slap ! ”



## SHARP PRACTICE.

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### CHAPTER XVIII.

SHOWING HOW A YOUNG WOMAN THOUGHT “A BIRD IN THE HAND WORTH TWO IN THE BUSH ;” FANCIED A SERGEANT RATHER THAN A CORPORAL, AND TOOK TIME BY THE FORELOCK.

WE had some droll shavers come as Volunteers to us, “said the old man,” from all regiments, and some of them soon settled down and became as it were lancers of *the* lancers ; but some of them were particularly known as instituting comparisons between the men *and women* they were among now, and those they had left ; not always, *I will say*, much to our advantage. However, our scutcheon being pretty bright, and our reputation not being lightly ‘whistled down the wind to prey at fortune,’ we put up with their jeers and flouts, and gradually ‘incinsid’ them into our system. I tell you, said the old chap, “sententiously,” it is a bad thing for volunteers to be praising up their original regiments at the expense of those with whom they have elected to throw in their lot, or to be drawing comparisons—which are odious ;—and should this meet the eye of any one who may have adopted the

doctrine of adhering strictly to their regimental calf-love, to eschew it altogether, and would say to them in the language of Shakespeare. "I prithee mend it!" "The habit never makes, but sometimes sadly mars, a man's prospects, and causes much bitterness of feeling. This, however, by the way when a non-commissioned officer volunteers, he must do so as a private, unless there is a vacancy in the troop to which he comes, which is seldom the case, and even if it were so, it is scarcely likely the commanding officer of a regiment would pass his own men and promote a stranger. Therefore let them come in what grade they will, they rank supernumerary until they prove themselves fitting, and get their turn of promotion. Well we had two, one a sergeant, the other a corporal—I need not say from what regiment—they were very lucky, and were made *pucca* in a very short time. Not that they were extra-smart, you know, but luck, sir, luck! They were both of them distinguished for a remarkable adoration of the fair sex, and were decidedly marrying-men, and had made divers unsuccessful plunges in their endeavours to hang their caps up on spare pegs in the married quarters. And strange as it may appear, they set their joint affections upon one object. Whether it was a blooming girl, a maiden waxing senior in her teens, or a languishing widow, who had a spare heart or hand to throw away,

this couple—comrades in everything—went in for the prize. Chapel (the sergeant) was a quiet unobtrusive man, plodding the even tenor of his way ; not much in point of personal appearance mounted or dismounted, but steady *lacitum* and quiet. Mills (the corporal) was quite the reverse. He was a dashing dragoon ; remarkable for good looks, sung an excellent song ; had received a fair education and in the days of which I speak was in much request as a clerk all over the regiment, and kept the books of the sergeant-major of his own troop. There was a matrimonial prize in the market at the time of which I write, a fine young girl, born in the regiment, and to subdue this maiden's obdurate heart, these two 'chums' did seriously incline. It was known that she had declared that she would marry no volunteer, but must have a husband who had always belonged to the regiment. This did not daunt them ; but alas their hopes were built upon sand ! A sergeant, argued the young lady, is better than a corporal, but oh ! how much better is a troop sergeant-major ! and so *he* carried the day, and the prize from all competitors !

Nothing chop-fallen by this first disappointment, these noble anglers kept fishing in the waters of would-be matrimony whenever there was a chance of a nibble ! Chapel, if he was rejected, kept his sorrows to himself, but Mills wailed over his

disappointments loudly, and aired his griefs in public, where he had more to laugh at him than give him consolation. But he took all as it came and did not appear to suffer much or at all in proportion to his extravagant declarations of disappointment. He seemed to become familiar with being classed among the rejected addressers, and took his niche there with the most perfect equanimity. Some were inclined to believe that Mr. Mills was going in for extensive practice in the noble art of love-making, and that he would come out very strong at last by making a successful *coup* and carrying all before him.

But although it was known that they had been rejected by all the maids and widows in the station, regimental and otherwise, or as Corporal Hennessy said "horse foot—and left-horn battery not to speake of the Bengal Horse Artillery," and Joe Mills was dejected beyond measure, there came a rent in the cloud, and the horizon was clear for another matrimonial observation! The troop sergeant-major died, and the blooming girl of three years previously was left a widow with two children. *Here* was a chance not to be lightly lost, and as is the habit in regiments even before the funeral of the departed non-commissioned officer had eventuated, the sporting fraternity were making bets upon the fortunate he who would secure the prize! All the *pro's* and *con's* were discussed with much deliberation and gravity.

Chapel (with the men) was a favourite, he being the highest in rank ; and female proclivities in all ages and stations were known to run in that direction ! It had not to be thought for a moment that a woman who had been a sergeant-major's wife would marry under the rank of sergeant at least ! To marry a corporal would be an intolerable *mesalliance*—against caste prejudices in fact, and not to be dreamt of. But again, Mills, the corporal, was a dashing fellow ; he was on the spot ; he had kept the sergeant-major's books and accounts, and was useful to the widow in her grief—which was boundless ! Although it was hinted that in her second matrimonial venture (which was quite decided) she might “please her eye and break her heart,” by marrying the corporal she might do worse, and he might have a chance, &c.

The funeral took place ! As the Scotch say “a most respectable funeral,” and the grief exhibited by the widow was perfectly astounding. In all the habiliments of seeming woe she leant on Mills's arm, and was (with difficulty of course) dissuaded from her intention of being buried in the grave with her dear, dear husband ! She would not—could not—live after him—and her efforts to throw herself headlong into the grave were only prevented by the accession of Corporal Hennessy to Mills's strength. [Hennessy quietly remarked that

"it was a pity there was no funeral pyre about the place, *the way the decent woman could perform suttee like a Christian ! an' be done wid it !*"]

Amid sobs and exclamations of deep affliction, she at length (with assistance) tore herself away ! And wending her way to barracks she allowed her grief to calm down under the soothing influence of Mills's sympathies and condolences ! Indeed, the heart-broken or nearly heart-broken widow seemed to listen very kindly to Mills's condolences and Joe in his eagerness to console and desire to replace the deceased in the estimation of the lady by his side, forgot the all too-recent deprivation, and pleaded his cause with the most determined energy.

Perhaps it was the fact of his frequent rejections that stimulated him to extra love-making power, perhaps it was the *savoir faire* with which his condolences were received that encouraged him. Be that as it may, he pushed his energetic sympathies as far as boundless assurance thought he was allowed to venture ; and he plumed himself upon the peroration he enunciated, when apologising for his straightforwardness which he said she (the being-consoled widow) "might lay down to his impudence, so she might."

"For, ye see," he continued, gently squeezing her arm to his side, "I'm not an auld hand at this kind of a thing, dy'e see. I'm ignorant an' inixpayrincid !"

"Oh Joe!" said the widow.

"Faith, yes;" said Joe. "But I'll say this; I think them two fine childer av yours wud be the betther av havin' a father to look afther them!"

"They would *that*," said the widow, sighing and wiping her eyes.

"An' they're very fond of me," said Joe, looking straight before him—and feeling as a man feels when he is about to take a header into an ice-covered bath—no use dilly-dalling—get it over. "And they're very fond of me I think; you seen how they clung to me to-day, an' how the oldest wan pud her arrums roun' me neck and kissed me."

"Yes, indeed, Joe," said the widow.

"Let *me* be a father to them," boldly said Joe. "Be mine, be mine! I'll take the place of the sergeant-major, an' be a father to them childer, an' I'll love you dearly!"

"Oh Joe!" whispered the widow, "I didn't think you were a marryin' man, and so—and so—I accepted *Sergeant Chapel* this morning!"

What words of mine can convey the consternation of Joe the consoler! He suffered the hand which was leaning on his arm to slip gradually away, and finding himself "clear" as he called it, he left the widow to her own resources and betook himself, with a speed augmented by agitation, dismay, and disappointment to his favourite place of resort—the canteen.

There he unbosomed himself as was his custom, and before the gun had fired that night it was generally known in the regiment that the *suttee* (as Corporal Hennessy called it) was indefinitely postponed, and that the widow, instead of obeying the stern mandates of a "haythen" custom, had assumed the privilege of her sex and allowed Sergeant Chapel to sacrifice himself instead on the altar of the charms she had erected.



## ARCADES AMBO.

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### CHAPTER XIX.

SHEWING HOW A TRANSFER WAS EFFECTED BETWEEN  
A MAN WHO HAD TWENTY COURT-MARTIAL ENTRIES  
IN HIS REGIMENTAL DEFAULTER-SHEET,—AND  
ANOTHER WHO HAD TWENTY-ONE.

*Scene.*—A frontier station.

*Time.*—Some five and twenty or thirty years ago.  
“I wish to see the colonel, sergeant-major,” said  
a bold dragoon to the sergeant-major of his troop  
one fine morning at the commencement of the cold  
weather.

“The colonel is it you wish to see, Kenny?”  
answered the sergeant-major, : “I tell you what, my  
gay young fellow, you are likely to see him once too  
often for your personal liberty, if you don’t change  
your conduct ; and upon my conscience it’s very  
nearly time you thought about taking such a step—  
that is if you have any such intention, which is  
doubtful. But what, may I ask, is the nature of the  
business on which you wish to see the colonel?”

“Well,” said Kenny, “the business is of the  
most urgent nature, and as you have invariably been  
a kind friend to me, I don’t mind telling *you*—

although it is leaving you is my intention ! I am going away !”

“ Going away” almost shrieked the sergeant-major ; “ going away ! Where are you going—you poor angashore of a fellow ?”

“ I want to get, if possible, a transfer to the 33rd Dragoons, sergeant-major !”

The sergeant-major stared at the man with the uttermost astonishment. The proposition was so astounding that the poor man’s faculties were driven completely wool-gathering, and he paused for some little time ere he ventured to speak. He kept staring and gasping ; but the applicant stood his ground manfully, as if he really wished an answer to his enquiry, and patiently bided the sergeant-major’s time, who at length found voice to say :—

“ Well ! go by all means, if they will have you, which I doubt ; but believe me, my friend, you will take nothing by your move, even if it be successful : and you will never regret leaving this regiment but once—and that will be every day in your life ! You will sup sorrow with the shortest handled spoon in this squad, and plenty of that same. However, if you persist I must acquaint the captain.”

And leaving Mr. Kenny, the sergeant-major went in search of his officer, to whom he communicated Kenny’s request to see the commanding officer.

“ About a transfer, I suppose,” said the captain.

"Yes, sir," said the sergeant-major, "about a transfer ;" more than ever astonished at the captain knowing anything about the matter.

"Let him attend the orderly-room," continued the captain, "I shall be there. The man is heavily in debt isn't he ?"

"Oh!" groaned the sergeant-major, "he's over head and ears in debt, and hasn't as much kit as would dust a flute."

"His debt will be paid," said the captain, "and see that he has a complete kit of everything, should we succeed in getting rid of him :" and with that he walked off.

The worthy sergeant-major looked after him uttering a low, long-protracted whistle ! "If *we* get rid of him !" mused the sergeant-major ; "I wonder was *I* included in the *we* ! By Jove, they do pretty much as they will, and never say a word to me on the subject ! But I can tell them *this* that—"

What the nature of the sergeant-major's intended communication was, will never now be known.

It took, we suspect, no particular shape, and if it did, speedily disappeared, as the commanding officer himself came on the scene, and returning the sergeant-major's salute, he said—

"Kenny belongs to your troop, sergeant-major ; doesn't he ?"

"He does, colonel, and wishes to see you this morning."

"Very well," said the colonel, "let him attend at the orderly-room when the office call sounds."

Accordingly at the appointed time Mr. Kenny, the transfer-wishing, attended the regimental levee. Most of the officers were present, and the colonel speedily came to business by saying—

"You wished to see me, my man?"

"Yes, colonel," said Kenny, and here he handed him a sealed letter. This the colonel opened and read, and handed it to the captain, who also read it, and then handed it to the adjutant, who returned it to the colonel.

No word was spoken during this time, and at last the commanding officer, after opening and closing the wonderful missive, which had much interest for all apparently, two or three times, at length said to Kenny.

"You wish to get a transfer to the 33rd?"

"If you please, sir."

"I have no objection; but the question comes to be, will they have you; how often have you been tried by court-martial?"

"I forget, sir," said Kenny, "the exact number of times, my education in arithmetical questions must have been neglected—but I think—at a venture—about nineteen times is as near as need be!"

"Sir," said the adjutant, "the court-martial book will show."

"True," said the colonel, "let's have it."

The book was produced, and showed that the interesting applicant for a transfer had been tried by four general courts-martial ; six district ditto ; three garrison ditto, and seven regimental "arraignments" of the same nature—in all twenty !

The colonel looked astonished ; "a long bead-roll of misfortune," said he. "What service have you, Kenny ?"

"Not a day, sir."

"Well," said the chief, "it is never too late to mend. By good conduct you could regain all you have lost. A man educated and connected as you, should be able to tell another story, at this time of day. However, endeavour to conduct yourself in a different fashion in the regiment to which you are about to go—and sergeant"—turning to the orderly-room clerk "let his papers be made out !"

It was some time before the men in the troop to which Kenny belonged, or indeed in the regiment, could realise the fact that Kenny, the "black sheep," was really to be permitted to go as a transfer to another regiment, or that the commanding officer of that other regiment should accept him. There was something very mysterious in the whole affair. And then the good people set to work wondering

who would come in his place—if any one—and calculated that *their* colonel would in all probability get a Roland for his Oliver.

Not that Kenny was disliked in the regiment. He was a clean, smart dragoon, and the only fault that could be laid to his charge was an unhappy addiction to the strong drinks of this or any other country, and an unhappy pre-disposition to get into scrapes, and facility in remaining in, and suffering for them, which other men far his inferiors in intelligence easily eschewed. And the orderly-room clerk was sorely pestered with enquiries on the subject.

“Was it really true that Kenny, with all his crime, had been allowed to be transferred?” was the general enquiry.

“Yes; it appeared so!”

“What! after all his devilment,” asked a staid church-going old sergeant.

“Yes!” said the man of regimental secrets. “And considering he is connected with one or more aristocratic and noble families, I shouldn’t be at all surprised if he got a commission in the 33rd.”

“No doubt!” said the old sergeant, “they can’t be very particular, and commissions must be plentiful!”

“Come,” said the orderly-room clerk, “he’s not so bad a man after all.” There are worse than he about the barracks sporting good-conduct badges.

The thing is—they haven't been found out! I remember well when Kenny was first punished. The offence was very simple and *from that day to this Kenny has had bad luck. The lash entered into his soul, sir!* I will tell you how it came about, and you can all of you—(for there were many listeners)—judge for yourselves how easily a man can get into scrapes and how difficult it is to regain a character once lost. “I am very well sure,” he continued, “that were any of us similarly situated it might have been as bad for us as for him, poor fellow! Thank God we live in better days *now* than when he commenced his soldiering, and the triangles in barracks or the gun-wheel in the field are neither of them so common as they were in his days. Kenny has been as much sinned against as sinning, as you shall hear. His first offence was a trifling one. You might not believe it, but it was far *the most heinous offence of punching holes in his stirrup-leathers!* It appeared that he had to parade as mounted orderly, and at the last moment he discovered that the holes in the stirrup-leathers (which were new) had not been punched. His comrade who had come to “bridle-up” for him made holes in them with a lump of a nail, and when Kenny, on the following day, took the leathers to the saddler's shop that they might be properly punched, the saddler-sergeant showed them to the Quarter-master and poor Kenny was sent to the guard-room,

tried, and punished for destroying his appointments. "I think there was some *cheek* in the matter, too," said the sergeant, "but I won't be certain."

"Wasn't he tried for striking Corporal Jack Magar?" asked a listener.

"He was, indeed," said the sergeant; that was another simple affair! Kenny was for the ride, one morning: overnight he had left his boots and spurs all ready to don in the morning, but when wanting they couldn't be found, and Kenny had to parade in high-lows (stable shoes). He was of course reported for having turned out without spurs, and was awarded three-days' drill. When he returned to barracks he set himself to watch who had his boots and spurs—and who should have them but Mister Jack Magar himself, the corporal who had reported him! He in his turn reported the circumstance but no notice was taken, and at night when the canteen was opened poor Kenny got tipsy; for the first time he was known to be in such a condition in the regiment: so when Magar saw this he ordered him to be confined, and instead of giving handcuffs to some of the escort to put on Kenny previous to his being taken to the guard-room, he attempted to put them on *himself*; Kenny felled him to the earth—was tried and sentenced to two hundred lashes.

Coming out of hospital he speedily became

addicted to intemperate habits ; and upon one occasion sitting quietly on his cot, this Corporal, Magar, came to look at him to see if he was tipsy. This irritated Kenny very much, and he was goaded almost to madness by hearing the corporal ask him " how he liked what he got the other day."

To which Kenny replied " that he liked it so well, he was quite ready for another dose to have the pleasure of knocking him down"—and he knocked the corporal down accordingly—was again tried and punished.

Afterwards he became quite reckless ; the story soon got about as to the leathers being punched, and how the corporal had improperly irritated him after he had been flogged, and Magar was reduced, which caused poor Kenny to remark that Magar would soon forget *his* stripes, but Kenny would never forget those *he* had received !

Deeper and deeper he sank in dissipation and degradation, but not without many efforts having been made to reclaim him. He was educated, as I have said, and intelligent ; was connected with respectable families, and was one of a lot of youngsters who had been expelled from college for some irregularities of which he was so heartily ashamed that he never went home after his expulsion but enlisted in an assumed name. You would never

have known anything of this, said the sergeant, but I understand his sister is married to an officer in our regiment, and he has asked his connections to interest themselves in procuring him a transfer.

You all know how gallantly he has conducted himself in the field ; how often promoted and how often reduced he has been ! You have seen him *in-unibus* galloping through the lines like a madman performing the lance exercise—mounted (bare backed) on his troop horse, and you have seen him walk quietly to the guard-room—and so give himself up ! “There are worse than Kenny,” said the sergeant, concluding his narrative.

“Well,” said I, to the old lancer—“how did the transfer work ?”

“Very well,” said the old man, “he left us ; and the next time I saw him was on the amputation table at Ramnugger waiting to have his leg amputated.”

“The ——”

“Don’t,” said the old man, “that gentleman had nothing to do with it. Kenny had performed prodiges of valour but had unfortunately got knocked over by a spent shot—and there he was !”

“There was no chloroform in those days,” said the old fellow, “and the Doctor said to Kenny—

“Will you have some wine, my man ?”

“*Make it rum Doctor, and then cut away !*”

“Mind you, there were all the grim paraphernalia

of cutting and sawing displayed, but they had no terrors for Kenny, for he had a bullet between his teeth, and held on by the sides of the table without a murmur until the operation was completed. An apothecary threw the amputated limb under the table. Kenny raised himself into almost a sitting posture and looking very hard at the subordinate medical officer he drily said "if you had taken such a liberty with that unfortunate leg a couple of hours ago I'm afraid you would have repented the action!"

"Well," asked I, "what became of him; did he die?"

"Deed an' he didn't," said the old man, "but lived to get his service restored, have two good-conduct badges and respectably invalided! He was one of the most dashing of the dashing 33rd."

"Who did you get in his stead? A model thirty-third man?"

"Oh then!" said the old fellow, "he was a *rale* model. If Kenny had 20 courts-martial, Micky Manton had 21!"

"He did well enough for a time; was an excellent musician and was sent to the band. He had also lost all claim to service and pension but was told that if he conducted himself well for a year he would have his service restored!"

"Which he did?"

"He did—in my eye, where there never grew a cherry," said the old fellow. "Why, he smashed his instrument at practice because he was spoken to by the bandmaster—and was near smashing *him*, too! Mickey had an amazing flow of bad language and that got him into endless trouble. Eventually he was tried by a court-martial for having been absent and making away with all his regimental necessaries and clothing. Be gorra!" said the old fellow, "*his cloak went!*" Well, he was sentenced to be flogged; he was tied up; the farriers were there cat in hand, when the colonel ordered him to be taken down.

"Manton," said the colonel, "I will give you another chance. Go; you are free!"

"I have a lot of punishment still to do, colonel," said the man.

"That is all forgiven" answered the chief. "There, your captain has consented to pay for the new kit with which you have been supplied. I trust this kindness will be appreciated; and I cannot tell you how pleased I shall be when, twelve months hence, I am able to say I have recovered your service for you!"

"The parade was dismissed and all were congratulating Mickey and wishing him luck of his good fortune."

"Which he deserved, I hope," said I.

"Well, bad luck from me, every day I see a pavin' stone and every day I don't, and that's every day in the week—but the bla-guard was absent that same night at watchsetting and so was his kit! He was off for three days, and brought back by an escort; it was evening stable hour, all the officers were at the end of the lines and Mickey had to pass them on his way to the guard-room. He abused them foully right and left, but the gentleman he abused the most was—"

"The captain, who did the most for him," said I.

"You're right," said he.

"That, my venerable friend," said I, "is the world's way."

"It was Mickey's anyhow, and a bad way."

"He must have been a beauty," said I.

"Be gorra, ye may say that, and tell no lie; without paint!"

"So, you see, we did get a Roland for our Oliver!"



## HAPPY SAM.

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### CHAPTER XX.

SHOWING HOW A MAN CAN GIVE A DOG A BAD NAME  
AND GET A GOOD DINNER BY IT.

"YOUR regiment is coming out again," the old lancer remarked to me the other night.

"Yes," said I, "the regiment is certainly coming, but not the regiment *I* knew."

"That's true," said he—and here he winked to himself privately—"all the better for that, I suppose."

"That as may be," I made answer. "One thing they *won't* do this time, which they did last time; that is, bring out as merry and as divil-may-care a lot of fellows as ever put their nose inside of a pewter measure!"

"Vulgar!" said the old fellow—"very. We have always been labouring under the impression that 'there were as good fish in the sea as ivir came out of id'—and I dare say they'll not be a bit behind the men who are gone."

"So far as regards doing their duty," said I, "there can't be a doubt about *that*. But the leaven

of devilment which in my day used to run through the corps from A troop to K—is gone, sir ! Gone !”

“ All the better,” said he; but he didn’t think so, I knew.

The same class of men are not in the regiment now. Improved in every way ; better behaved perhaps ; better educated, but yet without that *soupçon* of ludicrous daring and trickery which caused so much laughter at home, and which, exhibited in one man in a troop, has been the means of lightening many a hard day’s duty, and the recital of one of whose escapades long after it had happened, and when the actor was many a thousand miles away, was an epoch in many a man’s life, and made him admire what he was half inclined to be afraid of and caused him to regard, with some thing more than friendly interest, men whose rude aspect and speech were speedily forgotten in daily companionship. When rough became smooth, and when a willingness to work and a desire to be taught, an aversion to every thing sneaking and mean, and an eager readiness to “ take one’s own part,” was the sure passport to procure the initiation of a youngster into all the mysteries of “ old soldiership.” And once free of the guild, one had to do as Romans do. There was no shadow of turning about them. If you set your shoulder to the wheel, there it should be kept—or—one was relegated to a place far below

the salt, which they had placed in the centre of their table ! To get among a lot of these old files was of course a youngster's greatest delight, and he thought himself no small potatoe, and fancied he was rising in his profession if he was noticed by them. They could put a recruit up to so many *wrinkles*, as they called them ; were so full of yarns of glories past and gone, in their time of service ; the towns in which they had been quartered, and the thousand-and-one drolleries that make up a barrack-room existence for years at home.

The pranks they had amused their spare hours without ; the scrapes into which they had got, and from which they had been extricated either by themselves or their *confreres*—harmless and yet laughable—amused 'em mightily ; and of all within the scope of my recollection, the man at whom I used to laugh the most heartily was one Caslow—Sam Caslow—who was nick-named “the Happy.” He was a grave, saturnine man of swarthy complexion ; he never smiled ; a laugh was out of the question with him, and from the 1st of January till the 31st of December his countenance presented the same stolid appearance of grim discontent, into which the very wrinkles of his face had set themselves as if never to be unbent. It is needless to say that the *sobriquet* by which he was known, had been applied to him in derision ; and yet there was some truth in it too,

for despite his forbidding appearance and slow demeanour Sam was a "mad wag," and while others were shouting with uproarious merriment no muscle in Sam's face moved, and it was only by the quick glance of as bright an eye as ever shone in the divine head of beauty that any one—who knew him—was aware of the intense enjoyment experienced within and behind that adamantine phiz. When he was in good humour he made the most ludicrous propositions in a deep stern voice ; told the most laughable stories without discomposing himself, or being in the slightest degree affected by the uproarious merriment around him ; and was always ready and willing to lead or follow in any freak to pass away an hour or raise a laugh at any one's expense—his own inclusive. Withal "Happy Sam had music in his soul!" He was a bandsman, we mean performed on several instruments ; but the one he most affected was a flute of a most dismal and barbarous tone, wherewith he used, as Dick Wright said, to "curdle the blood" of the listeners. Now this joker belonged to Captain Croker's troop already celebrated in this veritable history, and formed one of a squad of whom mention hath also been made, and whose nominal roll was rendered illustrious by such names as Buck Hartley, O'Shea, Cope, and a few other bright and shining accidental stars. And on a certain fine morning in

Portobello Barracks, Dublin (no less), this coterie found themselves in a state of what Cope was pleased to call most "unquenchable drouth," and with an absolute emptiness of pocket which to them was appalling. Their applications to the non-commissioned officers had been vain and futile ; equally so had been their "sootheren" words to the mess-woman, and blank as the virgin page grew their visages as the prospects of "pots" on that fine morning waxed dimmer and yet more dim ! But Caslow solved the difficulty ; he of all had said the least. It was his turn now to show the man of action.

The rations for the day had been drawn, and there were fourteen pounds of as "fine mate as ever a knife was put in," in a tin dish on the table ! He made no remark, but quietly lifted the dish from the table put it (and its contents) on his shoulder and marched off to the ration stand where the butcher had served out the meat. Indeed, that and the bread were the only rations which *were* served out daily, the *etceteras* being provided regimentally. Here Mr. Sam waited until all the non-commissioned officers had disappeared, and walking boldly in to the astonished man of bone and sinew he said that the men of his squad had been invited abroad to dine, and had deputed him to exchange the ration meat for its value in the current coin of

the realm, at the contract price of the day, which, he was careful to inform the butcher, was much less than the current price.

"Wouldn't the sergeant-major—"

"Bother the sergeant-major," said Sam, "*he* issued the rations; *we* received them. They are ours; *we* sell them to *you*!" Let's have the price!"

The butcher was satisfied; the price was paid, and briskly jingling the coin, as he walked, Happy Sam went off to the barrack-room and displaying his argosy an adjournment took place to the canteen where the price of the solids was speedily converted into fluids.

The conversion of "mate into tin" was explained amid much laughter and applause, which failed to extract a single sympathising glance from Sam's "paid faytures."

"Bad luck to ye for a schamer," said Hartley to him, "how ivir will we get over this at dinner time?"

"Have another half gallon in Buck, me boy," said Sam in his most doleful and sepulchral tones, "and let the dinner—provide for itself!"

"Right ye are," said Hartley, "the dinner that *was* provided for us *you've provided for*—and where we're to provide another—"

"Come on to yer brequest," said Caslow dolefully, "you're enough to make a man believe there

was nothin' but atin to be done ; yer health," and here he took a mighty swig, and walked forth as melancholy a man (in appearance) as was within,—as they say in Dublin—the “bills of mortality” that morning !

At breakfast the whole question of bargain and sale was discussed and various schèmes were mooted and abandoned as to how the absence of the meat was to be accounted for at midday. The entire population of the room were of the happy-go-lucky style, which takes things pretty much as they come, and no undue importance—if any was attached to the fact that they all might come to grief over the impromptu and illegal transfer.

The mess-woman was the most clamorous of the number at one period, but *she* was speedily disposed of by her husband, an old trumpeter with a moustache like a decayed clothes-brush (the decent woman had a suspicion of a moustache herself, and had been told once by a sister with whom she had on one occasion got her jawing-tackle on board—to her dire discomfiture—to parade herself *properly shaved* for her inspection, which turned her flank completely) and the discussion was wound-up, as the stable trumpet sounded, by Sam Caslow.

“ Yez are all talkin’,” he said turning the tin-dish in which the meat had been, over and over on the table—“ *what wud ye say, now, to a mate pie?* ”

The gravity with which he asked the question, and the look he cast at the dish and at the men standing in various attitudes as if in expectation of being relieved from a great incubus, caused a perfect storm of laughter, and they all made for the door with a rush while Sam remained behind to say a word to the "mistress."

"I don't know how we will get over this, ma'am," said Sam.

"*You* should know, Sam Caslow," said the dame, briskly. "You know, of course, what you done wid the mate."

"Is it me, ma'am," asked Sam blandly.

"Yes, indeed it is," was the answer. "Is it me indeed" she said (mimicking Sam) "I'll let the—"

"Nance," interposed her husband, "mind your own business."

"I didn't think, ma'am," said Sam, "that ye had so low an opinion av me as to think, I cud be sich a cannibal as to ate fourteen pounds o' mate at a sittin'!" He was as grave as a judge.

"I didn't—"

"Nance," said her husband, "take yerself aff. There's a child cryin' for ye at the fut av the stairs, and av the dinner's gone, *sure we'll have the dessert.*"

"Desert ye thafe?" said Nance, "who'se talkin' av desertin'! What wud pud id in the hid of a man like you wid twenty years' service to desert!"

" You would," said Sam stalking out of the room ; "good mornin' t'ye."

And with this " heavy blow and great discouragement—" Sam left her.

There was doubtless a good deal of anxiety fluttering away the *mauvais sujets*, as to how the absence of the meat at dinner time should be accounted for. The non-commissioned officer of the squad and room was on guard and so *he* was out of the way, and after the troops returned from exercise and the dinner hour approaching it was unanimously agreed among the conclave that Sam Caslow as being " a divertin' vagabone"—bandsmen went by that name in the regiment—he should see the matter out. This decision was only communicated to the individual in question, and he said he thought he would be able to " pull through ;" and he had been in so many scrapes and had so contrived to extricate himself—and others—that the most unbounded faith was placed in him, albeit he did not condescend upon the " reason why," or described the method by which they were to be exempted from what he called " all further botheration about the matter."

" Only one thing," said Sam, " ye must see that the mess-woman is kept out of the way. I have every thing ready but—the—the—"

" Mate !" said one of the conspirators.

" That's it," said Sam, " the cloth nicely laid—the

plates on the table, and the pepper, salt, and mustard well to the front—and we'll make a fair show anyhow."

"If the captain comes?" asked one in great dread.

"Captain," said Sam, "av the captain doesn't come we're done for! That's the man I want—for he's goin' to give us our dinner!"

To all enquiries on the subject Sam was imperviously deaf, and soon the dinner-trumpet sounding, told that their difficulty was approaching a climax. The table was laid it is true; the plates, knives, &c., were arranged in symmetrical neatness; the potatoes were steaming in *their* dish, the bread was to the fore, but the *piece de resistance* was—who knows where!

Enter the captain, his subalterns, the troop sergeant-major, the orderly-sergeant.

"Attention!" from the oldest soldier.

"Sit down men; messes good?" from the captain.

He looked at the sergeant-major as he missed the meat—"no meat"—said he.

The sergeant-major looked for the mess-woman; she was *non est*, and thinking that the dinner had been sent to bake, as was the custom in those days, he was about to enquire into the matter, when Sam Caslow quietly said—

"Beg pardon, captain, I can explain this."

"Oh!" said the captain, sniffing, "do please."

Now the captain had a splendid Newfoundland dog, which was free of the barracks generally, and his own troop-room and stables in particular. The men were in the habit of petting and feeding him, and it was with no small difficulty that his master had cured him of his Bohemian habits; indeed cured he was not, for occasionally he would break away, and was sure to be found somewhere in the troop. And his name was BEAU—a name he certainly deserved for his every attribute proclaimed him a very *beau ideal* of an animal; and at the time Sam was talking to the captain master *Beau* had his great nose thrust into Sam's hand, was rubbing up against him and wagging his tail with a vehemence which pronounced that Sam and he were old and fast friends.

"Well sur," said Sam (and here he gave *Beau* a sounding pat), here's where it is, sur! *Beau* came round the room for a scamper this mornin' and seein' the mate, bad luck to me, but he made one dart at the dish, took the mate in his mouth, and was off wid it like a red shank!"

The captain looked at Sam, who bore the scrutiny manfully.

"The whole of the day's meat?" asked the captain.

"Aye, faith, sur," said Sam,—"*an' if the truth was known I'm sure the dog was sorry there wasn't more of it.*"

"Why didn't you report this?" asked the captain.

"Ah then, sur," said Sam, "who would judge a dog like *Beau* anything?"

"Well! sergeant-major," said the captain, "send these fellows down to the canteen; let them have bread and cheese and beer for dinner to-day, and turning to *Beau* he said" ah *Beau!* *Beau!!* you're an expensive rascal. I must keep you chained up I find! At which saying, *Beau*, thinking he was being applauded for some good deed, cut a caper or two and preceded his master out of the room!

The serjeant-major turned to give the necessary orders for the *impromptu* dinner which had been ordered by the captain. He had grave doubts of the way in which the meat had disappeared, but an order *was* an order, and the men must have their dinner and their beer.

"Hartley," said he, "you are the oldest soldier; take the men down and tell the canteen-keeper to—"

"Oh then," said Hartley, "me tell the canteen-man! Be gorra he'd hunt me."

"We'll go," said "Happy Sam," and wait there till you come sergeant-major, that will be the best. Sure we're none of us very hungry and it wouldn't look well to be *crowdin'* over there now. Sure we *was all goin' anyhow*, and here he winked at the others, "and were only waitin' till the captain went round."

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"Oh then," said Hartley, "me tell the canteen-man! Be gorra he'd hunt me."

"We'll go," said "Happy Sam," and wait there till you come sergeant-major, that will be the best. Sure we're none of us very hungry and it wouldn't look well to be *crowdin'* over there now. Sure we was all goin' anyhow, and here he winked at the others, "and were only waitin' till the captain went round."

The sergeant-major disappeared, the restraint was broken, and the highest compliment Sam Caslow ever had paid him was that paid him by Hartley in the words with which this chapter is headed—

“ Be gorra, Sam, ye’r a grate fellow ! I heard them say at home ‘ give a dog a bad name an’ hang him ’—but you do better than that ; you give a *good* dog a *bad* name—and we all get a dinner by it ! Come on ye MACHIAVEL !”

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## HAPPY SAM.

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### CHAPTER XXI.

SHOWING HOW SAM CASLOW WAS BOTH DONE  
AND UNDONE.

THE occurrence related in the preceding chapter happened in Portobello Barracks, as I think is mentioned. The regiment was very gay in those days ; there had been a squadron at Lienster House, during the Smith O'Brien *furore*, and the men had made many friends in Dublin previous to the arrival of the entire regiment from Dundalk, where it had been stationed.

All soldiers know what Dublin is ; a terrible place for *duty*, but as great in the opposite direction in point of relaxation ; and among those who had none of the first to perform, and as much as he chose of the latter, our friend Sam was in the “very frontest” rank ! He had friends apparently in every regiment in the service, and from Beggars Bush to Richmond, and from the Royal Barracks to the Pigeon House, Sam was heartily welcomed. Nor did his friendships run only in the military line ; his civilian friends were legion, and the drollery of his conduct, combined with the gravity of his appearance and general tone of conversation,

made him the welcome guest of old and young. In these circumstances Sam confessed that he had "near been makin' a fool of himself wid them deca-vers"—meaning his sweethearts of whom he had "galore"—but the most interesting episode among all his multifarious "coortin expeditions" he was wont to tell with a grave countenance ; looks of most doleful sorrow and a voice of intense feeling, a little caricatured perhaps, but irresistibly ludicrous. The story of his love and the declaration of it was told in half a dozen sentences, and I am tempted to give it as he gave it. "She was a good girl, Sam?"

"Believe me," said Sam, "she *was*—and a beauty—a shoemaker's daughter in James' Street, no less !

"A shoe-binder?"

"Just so ; she *bound* me as tight as ivir she bound a shoe."

"And she left you?"

"Oh then ! she did—just."

"May be she didn't care for you, Sam ?"

"May be not ; d'ye think a girl like that would tell a *falsity*? Niver!"

"How do you know she cared for you, Sam?"

"Why, man dear, she *tould* me."

"Told you ! You asked her?"

"Divil an ax ! the thing come out permiskus in conversashin."

"Let's hear how."

"We wor strowlin'," says Sam, "on the banks  
of the canal on a Sunday evenin', and was talkin'.  
We got rather particular as we came near the gate,  
and after I had bid her good-night, she held a  
hoult of me hand in hers—and says she 'Sam' says  
she. *I'd die for you, but—I'd like to live a while wid  
you first!* them very words ; and if that's not  
sayin' all a girl could say—but bad luck to her I  
niver seen her again!"

Sam enjoyed himself amazingly. He had passes without end, and had much general dissipation both in and out of barracks in these halcyon days. But Sam's rose leaves occasionally got crumpled. He had (belonging to the band) a white horse, which of all the horses he had ever met (Sam's own expression), was the most "cruel and designing baste of a horse that ever wagged a tail!"—"He knows" said Sam "when I have a pass ; he has a coat on him like a Newfoundland dog, and to see that horse (bad luck to him again,) on a Monday morning when I go to stables is a sight to draw tears from the eyes of a Christian ! For I have to wash him down from his nose to his tail, and he takes a week to dry !" and not being particularly partial to "hand-rubs," it was discovered that Sam once or twice peeping into the stable and seeing "Jack" his horse—in the condition he so graphically described, had put himself in the sick-report and,

leaving a recruit or some one else to take the “rough off Jack,” he betook himself to hospital, complaining of pains and aches all over his frame, but especially his back on more than one occasion. Sam had very quietly “got over” the hospital sergeant-major, and after waiting until after morning stables, and having had a refreshing rest, he would suddenly pretend (he knew his horse was clean by that time) to be perfectly recovered, and would walk off to his barrack-room with his tongue in his cheek.

But the story of the pitcher going often to the well was to be true in Sam’s case. His sudden illnesses and speedy recoveries got wind, and the circumstance being mentioned to the surgeon (who knew Sam well), he gave an order that when next he made his appearance he was to be detained until he came—no matter what hour—that he was to be admitted a patient in fact.

On the following Monday morning, Samuel made his appearance. He had been on leave the night before, and with an aching head and a predisposition to somnolency, discovering that “Jack” was a “perfect picture,” and “would take a day to clane,” he reported himself sick, and was duly “collected” and sent to hospital with the other sick men.

When he got to the hospital, the sergeant-major made the usual enquiries from all, and came last to Sam who was writhing in much apparent agony.

"Bad again Caslow?" said the sergeant-major.

"This time I'm kilt!" (Here he howled almost from the violence of the pain (?)).

"Old complaint I suppose?"

"Oh! (another wrench) yes—all over."

"Where?"

His hand on his back "oh! here!" (ah! a prolonged wrench ending in a wriggle.)

Sergeant-major gives Sam a poke with the fingers in the back which makes him jump!

"Poor fellow," he says to the hospital orderly, "take him up to No. 3, and get the cauterizing irons ready; the doctor wants to operate on you," turning to Sam; "he says these pains are getting chronic, and require a violent remedy; he wishes to see you."

Now when Sam heard the order given that he should be taken up to No. 3, his pains had suddenly assumed a wonderful change for the better; and by the time the peroration of the cauterizing irons and the doctor's wish to see him had been reached, a perfect cure had been effected, and in good set terms he stated so to the sergeant-major. But that official paid no attention to him, and he again told the orderly to get the "irons" in readiness. The orderly accordingly went to the surgery, and brought from thence a formidable looking box, which, on being opened, displayed to Sam's view a series of little instruments—shining and knobbed at the ends with

handles "of sizes." These knobs it was explained to Sam, were to be heated to a white-heat, and if necessary applied by the medical officer to the region where the pain complained of lay. To express the intensity of Sam's desire to escape this "ordeal by fire," is beyond my small powers. All his persuasion availed not with the sergeant-major, and he was inducted into hospital clothing and to No. 3 ward, to await Dr. Carline's appearance. The surgeon was a gentleman who enjoyed a grim joke, and Sam was doomed to be a victim for once. Meanwhile Sam's perturbation was great and was much increased by the appearance of the surgeon.

"What's your name, my man—Caslow, isn't it?" asked the doctor.

"Yes, sir," said Sam.

"You've been here before with pains; and I didn't see you. How's that?"

"I felt better, sir, and didn't wish to trouble you."

"*Didn't you?* You didn't get better this morning?"

"Oh yes, he did, sir," said the sergeant-major, "but as you said you wished to see him, I detained him."

"Um!" said the surgeon "get the irons?"

"Yes, sir."

"That's right; now Caslow just lie down on this bed, and show me where you feel the pain."

"But, sir"—

The surgeon nodded to the sergeant-major and Sam was speedily placed upon a bed on his face, and indicating that the pain was between his shoulders the doctor proceeded to poke and poke with his fingers until he reached a place where the pain must have been intense as our bed-held friend made an awful wrench in an endeavour to get up, but was held fast by the sergeant-major and the orderly, the surgeon requesting him to remain in that position while he applied his remedy, which was an application of one of the knobbed irons before mentioned as hot as it well could be, tapped lightly three or four times on the indicated spot! The tapping, apparently light enough, had a wonderful effect on Sam, for he burst all restraint, sprang from the bed, dashed out of the room and out of the door, getting half way across the barrack-yard before he was overtaken and brought back.

The sudden cure had caused much amusement to the on-lookers, and the surgeon grimly asked Sam when he returned to the ward "how he liked *that tap?*"

Sam made a wry face.

"Not so well," said the surgeon, "as the tap you had last night, eh? Well! whenever you feel as you felt this morning, just come to the sergeant-major or to me—and you'll find *that tap always on!* It's very refreshing!"

But Sam had enough of that cask—and that's how he was *done*—for it is needless to say he never went back to try it.

And how he was “undone” came about in the following fashion :—

The bold, undaunted, and most marvellous flute-player was returning to barracks on a Sunday night towards the small hours, having been enjoying himself to his heart's content in the various military *rendezvous* from the barrack-gate to the “Hole in the wall” in the Phaynix. Now in Dublin there is only one drawback to a dragoon's Sunday enjoyments, and that is that he must be in full dress on that day, if he wishes to go abroad. Now the dragoons in my day did not by any means relish this restriction. They are never, as a rule, fond of “full dress,” and when on enjoyment bent they felt that they were not quite so far up to the mark in their full dress coat—waistbelt and helmet—as they would have been in a dandy jacket and smart forage-cap. However, there was no dodging the order, which was as irrevocable as the laws of the Medes and Persians, and truth to say the order had the effect—whether such was its intention I cannot say—of keeping many men in barracks who would otherwise have been afield. But this restriction could not daunt Sam ; had fifty helmets to be worn, and if he had been to be swaddled in waist-

belts and loaded with dress coats *he* must have gone through all these annoyances "to the bitter end."

To chronicle the extent of Sam's researches after (and his luck in finding) boon companions would be a harder task than I am willing to impose upon my readers or myself ; but it is a matter of moment to set down in this place the fact that Sam had been *very* successful in his researches, and when he left the hostel rejoicing in the appellation of the "Bleeding Horse"—his last house of call previous to his making an advance (in echelon fashion I am afraid) on the barracks—his epaulets were somewhat tarnished ; his helmet next set on his martial brow with that mathematical precision which the adjutant would have deemed essential, and the buckle of his waistbelt was exactly where it ought not to be !

From these small matters it may be inferred that it was nothing very wonderful if Sam mistook the broad lights dancing on the water of the canal from the lamps on Portobello bridge for Her Majesty's highway—and walked straight into the water !

There was much hurry and bustle and Sam was ultimately fished out—thoroughly sobered and most thoroughly ducked. When the alarm was originally given that a dragoon had fallen into the canal, a messenger was instantly despatched to the barracks which were close by ; and almost as soon as Sam was extricated from this perilous position, which had

wound up his day's amusements, a sergeant of the regiment and a file of men were on the spot to render assistance should such have been required. When they found, however, that no greater harm was done than a couple of hours' work could repair, they were inclined to be offended that the business had not had a more tragical ending, and were more pressing than polite in endeavouring to hustle Sam off before he was well recovered from the effects of his submersion.

Late as the hour was, there was a little crowd collected, and their sympathies were all with Sam—and their mutterings were aught but complimentary to the non-commissioned officer and his party.

"You were drunk of course," said the sergeant to Sam, "this has sobered you I suppose?"

To which Sam paid not the slightest attention, but in tones of the deepest langour and as if he were in the last stage of exhaustion hoarsely enquired—

"Where is the unfortunate craythur?"

"What creature?" reiterated the sergeant.

"Ah!" said Sam drawing his breath with an effort—and looking all round the crowd—"the unfortunate craythur that jumped into the canal!"

The sergeant looked at the police constable, who in answer to the look vouchsafed the information that *he* had seen no one jump into the canal; and that he at all knew that there had been any one, was by hearing the splash and helping to fish Sam out.

But Sam was not to be so put off. "Ah!" said he, addressing the crowd—and his voice was more melancholy and choked than ever—"Poor craythur! (here he looked round again). *She was goin' to drown herself!* (a shudder from the crowd) and I was going home to barracks" continued Sam, "*and sure I wouldn't be a man if I didn't jump in an' endeavour to save her!*" "(More power to you! from the crowd. Good boy—*great* fellow, and such encouraging and approving epithets on Sam's behalf.)" "Did no one see her, poor craythur? She must have got out and hurried off—for shame in the bustle caused by saving *me*," said Sam, "who would have died to save her, poor craythur!"

Another approving murmur from the crowd—broken in upon by the sergeant asking a few more questions of the police constable and some of the bystanders who had seen or heard no woman, that gentleman forthwith set the whole proceeding down as a *ruse* of Sam's for getting out of the scrape he had fallen into, and after laughing heartily at it (as did the escort) he marched Sam off to the guard-room where after having been supplied with habiliments of a mere dry description than he wore, he went to sleep; but not before he had told an interesting historiette to the guard, as to the "unfortunate craythur."

"Was she young, Sam?" asked one of the guard.

"Young! av course she was young—and handsome; and she was cryin'! poor craythur!"

"How d'ye know, Sam?"

"Didn't I see her as plain as I see you this minute; the tears was droppin' down her face, and just before she wint into the water she turned and took a look—poor craythur! such a look!"

"As she was lookin' at *you* Sam, may be the looks of you frightened her, and she went into the water *accidental?*"

This supposition, although it caused some laughter, was treated by Sam with the most utter contempt; and with a sigh of pity on the unbelievers all round him—Sam went off to sleep—and waking in the morning adhered to his story.

"There was no one to contradict him; there was no charge against him; his clothing might have been damaged by accident; sober men had accidentally fallen into the canal in broad day as well as at midnight, and Sam obtained credit for the chivalric feeling which he declared had prompted him—so he said—to dash into the water for the purpose of rescuing an unfortunate craythur." All were inclined to look on the "better side of the question save the sergeant who had escorted him to barracks.

Questioned by the adjutant, this worthy boldly avowed that there was no particular woman who had

committed the act stated by Sam ; *he* had not seen her ; the escort had not seen her ; the police constable on duty had neither seen nor heard of her ; and it was only at Caslow's suggestion that any question of a woman having been in the water had been raised at all. "The fact is, sir," said the sergeant, "Caslow was drunk."

"Hear him now!" from Sam, in a melancholy wail.

"Silence, sir," said the adjutant. "Did you," he asked, turning to the sergeant, "confine Caslow for being drunk?"

"No, sir!"

"You have neglected your duty, if he *was* drunk, in not having confined him for being in that condition. If he was sober—you have over-stepped your duty in saying he was drunk. Go to your room under arrest. I shall enquire into the matter, Caslow !

"Sir," said Sam, much elated at the discomfiture of the sergeant.

"The colonel is willing to believe that you got into the canal in the way you say. He has ordered me to release you and send you to your duty. Sergeant!" to the sergeant of the guard "release Caslow!"

"Yes, sir," said the sergeant. "You're in luck, Sam."

"Ah!" said Sam, "but it's bad luck for all that. Me best shute isn't worth a traneen ; I never belayed

there was so much mud in the bottom of a canal,  
for I have been rubbin' all mornin' an' it's not off  
yet."

"If they had found out Sam—"

"Hush," said Sam, "let them be in their finding out ; it's all past now—but I give you me oath if you had seen me ten minutes before the sergeant, *you wouldn't have given me a respectable duck to look after—let alone belave I jumped into the canal after an unfortunate craythur !* Morning sergeant—I am goin' to practice ! "

"No doubt !" said the sergeant looking after him—*it's you that's the fine ould flute-player !*"

And having shown how Sam was "done," and "undone," I leave his reputation in the hands of my readers.



## CHRISTMAS DAY.

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### CHAPTER XXII.

SHOWS HOW CHRISTMAS DAY WAS " KEPT " IN A  
REGIMENT THIRTY YEARS AGO.

YULE Tide, most sacred of all the sacred festivals in the year ! In all the mansions of the great, in all the houses of the rich and of the poor, in all the provinces of the earth (for there are few to which the Christian religion has not permeated), the heart rejoiceth as the anniversary comes round. The very name of the day itself, besides all its other attributes, " brings healing on its wings ;" and callous indeed must be the man or woman to whom, even in the depths of grief, it brings no thrill of delight, and in whom it excites no emotion.

The king or kaiser shares these emotions in common with the poorest man in their dominions, and they hail the advent of the blessed day with rapture.

Christmas brings beneficence in its train to the indigent, it softens the hearts of the veriest Scrooges, causes the rich man to be thankful for the mercies which have been vouchsafed to him, and disposes him to share with his poorer and more needy brethren the goods the gods have provided.

In the profanity incidental to such festivals, (for where is there not profanity?) there is a tinge of repentance more or less, and it becomes less obvious ; and as for its sacred surroundings, they increase in ratio as their reverse diminishes.

It is, in fact, the mingling of all the elements of human feeling, sacred or profane, upon one day in the year where there is the least discord. The man of grace becomes more gracious : the wicked less wicked—for the day at least.

The rich man shares his riches : the poor man forgets his poverty for one day out of the three hundred and sixty-five for the sake of our blessed SAVIOUR, whose natal day, now nearly nineteen hundred years ago, they celebrate each in their particular way.

Labour ceases for the four-and-twenty hours : away at sea, those who go down in ships and see the wonders of the great deep, rejoice and are glad : ashore, even in the field, and when in front of the foe, hail sacred day with delight, and they strike harder at their enemy, or take a surer aim, be sure, because it is Christmas Day, and swear roundly they will make their opponents remember that “it wasn’t for nothing they turned them out on Christmas Day.”

It would seem to be a work of supererogation to describe a Christmas Day anywhere. It has been

stereotyped so often in “thoughts which breathe and words which burn,” and by men and women so facile in word-painting in all styles, in all languages, and in all countries, that the pen lags and the thought arises that the task is almost hopeless. The exquisite carols of Dickens, although unread by hundreds of thousands, have been sung in their hearts nevertheless, and *his* was the hand that touched the string which he *knew* vibrated alike in high places and in low! It was reserved for him to bring those feelings to the light—to sound the grandest pæan that ever awoke humanity! We have had descriptions of Christmas days passed; Yule logs burned; Christmas candle lighted; Wassail in its highest and noblest aspect for the old; Christmas trees for the young; holly, ivy, mistletoe, and ever-greens of all descriptions for every one in hall, homestead, and cottage, and in town and country, and they all point much to one end—enjoyment and happiness.

But “all Lombard Street to a China orange,” there are few of my readers who have come across a description of a Christmas Day in a barrack-room some thirty years ago. There *may* be some of them who have spent such a day in such a place, and as it is the intention of the present writer to endeavour to describe one, to them he appeals for the truth and accuracy of his portrayal.

There were serious and comic elements in those same days—and that *is* the truth.

The first of the many is not readily to be forgotten : thirty years have gone since then, and the remembrance of that Christmas Day is as vivid—aye more vivid—than last Christmas Day.

How many thousand weary miles of land and sea have been trodden and sailed since then ! Weary nights, wearier days ; sunshine and shade ; Varna and its fevers ; Constantinople with its mosques, its gardens, and its palaces ; Balaklava with its indented harbour, which from the open sea you cannot discover until a tremendous rent in a hill-face reveals the basin with the old Genoese fort crowning the height above it ; Tchernaya with its Sardinian and French victory (we were only looking on) ; the Traktir Bridge under whose arches ran the blood-stained stream ; Sebastopol with its ruins ; Eupatoria with its sands, and the wild waters of the Black Sea washing (when the wind was in one direction) to the doors of our tents ! an expedition to Sack, where destruction of the enemies' supplies was the object ; then Constantinople and Scutari again ; and then home for a brief month, and away again to India, where we arrived in time for the great outbreak in '57 ; Meerut on the 10th of May in that eventful year ; Delhi thereafter till its fall ; and then two years and five months under

canvas from Agra to Nusseerabad (chasing Tantia Topee) ; then here and there, and where not ? Oudh and Rohilkhund, and back to Meerut again—all since that Christmas night ! One can sum up a good deal in half-a-dozen lines ; but it is a long vista to look back on, believe me, and if the word of a truthful historian can be accepted, it is hereby declared that he and his readers would have been, and are, a good deal better in bed than where he has been . on divers occasions since then, and that he will never be so near death until his dying day, oftener than he cares to reckon during that period.

However, we will come back to the Christmas in a barrack-room thirty years ago, and please to come with me.

There is a wonderful difference between the barrack-rooms then and now. In those days the same care and attention was not lavished on the soldier. The rooms were squalid in comparison, imperfectly lighted, ventilated and in every way vastly inferior to the barrack accommodation afforded now.

There were no men cooks ; the wife of one of the private soldiers (or a non-commissioned officer's perhaps) did all the cooking and washing for so many men as were in one room, generally 12 or 14, and she lived in the room, having one of the corners, usually the one next to the fire-place, screened off for the accommodation of herself, her husband,

and her family—sometimes as many as six, seven or eight, without any more privacy or separation than the screen afforded. Such of the married folks as were not required for mess-room purposes lived all together, each in their particular compartment of one barrack-room. I have seen as many as six families, and some of them large ones, in a “married-room” as it was called (there was only one room of that description in the regiment); and such of the married folks as could not be accommodated there had to live outside, and a small allowance for lodging-money made them.

And although great exception would be taken in our present days to this somewhat curious arrangement, the people seemed really, in the particular regiment to which reference is made, at least, to get on very well indeed, and, although they (the married folks) must have been sadly put out at times, no complaint was made.

It was taken quite as a matter of course, and, like the eels with the process of skinning, they got “used to it.”

To the beginner—well—that ordeal has not to be gone through now, and may be passed.

Some of these “mess-women,” as they were called, were notable cooks, mighty laundresses, and so forth.

Some were cross and tabooed, and some were popular and good-tempered ; and it was considered

rather a lucky thing—for a youngster especially—to get into a room over which one of the good-tempered ones held sway.

And it was the fortune of the present writer to be one who was in an apartment presided over by a veritable prototype of Mrs. Baguet of illustrious memory, and who was the prime mover in the Christmas festivities herein to be described.

Her name was Hogarty: her husband was a rough-riding corporal; and she had four or five of the handsomest children, from eight years old to a month or two, that one could see on a long summer day.

Her husband had an amazing faculty for consuming fluids of the most ardent description, and from many a scrape Sally—that was her Christian name—extricated him.

Well, a week before Christmas on this occasion to which I allude, all the men in the room being assembled at tea-time, Sally held forth to the effect that she had been at the captain's, and had seen the lady who had been very kind to her, and said that it was the captain's intention to give the men of his troop a little treat in addition to the usual Christmas dinner (for every captain in the regiment gave that), and that she, Sally aforesaid, was to be the prime mover in the whole business, and that what *she* said was to be law in the room; that the room was to be decorated in such a way as no room

in the regiment could touch ; that every man was to do his very best, and put his best foot foremost towards attaining that end ; that “ loads” of holly, ivy, and mistletoe were to be had for the “ axing,” — “ and,” said Sally, concluding her oration, “ I’ll lave it to yerselves to do the thing dacent. Take no notice av’ Nid (her husband) wid his dog’s tricks, but just do what I tell you.

“ Many hands make light work ; you can kape the thing to yerselves for a day or two ; think what ye’re goin’ to do, an’ how, and on Christmas Eve, plase God, we’ll make this room into a place fit for the good people (fairies).”

Therefore it was agreed among the old hands, and of course the young ones had to follow suit, that their own counsel should be kept, and that nothing should be said out of their own particular circle on the subject until the great day itself.

Then the men began to reckon the duty ; to count up how many would be found for guard and stable-guard on Christmas Day ; the very fatigue-roll was called, and great was the delight, and loud the expressions of that same, of those whom the duty would not “ touch.”

It so chanced that a wonderful degree of unanimity existed among the men of Sally’s room : so far as the heavy work was concerned, she was relieved of that by some of the men daily, and “ hewing of

wood and drawing of water" was as nought to *her*; and she paid them back by divers little kind offices *then* plentiful enough, but *now*—doubtful: so they kept together well enough, and the talk about what was to be, was all confined to themselves.

The better for that, for a regular plan was agreed upon, and as Sally herself said.

"Boys, deer! ye only want the stuff now, and you'll see how the thing will be done as asy as kiss han' in a couple of hours' time. I'll engage to have the matarials here be 8 o'clock at night, an' it's quare to me if we can't be in apple-pie-order before lights-out."

So on the Christmas Eve, when stables were dismissed, sure enough at the door was standing the captain's spring cart, laden with all the greenery always considered concomitant with the great festival for the whole troop.

We selected our share, and whether it was that the men took more interest for their own sake, or that Sally kept them well up to the mark, *our* share was certainly the lion's.

Sally was in the cart herself dispensing the holly and ivy, and pricking her fingers, and scattering the berries about, while Ned held the light.

"Howld it up, Nid, ye devil," she said to him, "You're not over an' above steady; I think ye must have been at the canteen havin' a tot or two."

" Sorra tot," said Ned, who was three parts screwed, " Bud I know I'm goin' to get wan when this business is over."

" Ah! now," said Sally, in reply, as she tossed her last bunch of holly down, " sorra sup ye'll get this blissid Christmass Ave, Nid, av' ye'r head was like goold, an' ye'r feet the same colour! Be this an' be that, from me this blissid night ye won't get as much as ye could put in ye'r eye, an' see none the worse fur!"

" Musha now," said Ned, " is id afther all the trouble I tuk!"

" Trouble," said Sally with a sniff, "'tis the quare trouble you *give* let alone *take*. Make haste now an' we'll see what's to be done;" and Ned said to himself, " there's pots in perspective," which observation had got to be regarded as a " Hogarty" in the regiment.

Well, when the room was reached, there were a dozen great fellows stringing holly and ivy, wreathing the walls, and placing bright green leaves in every nook and corner. It was intended to have a star of sword-blades and scabbards at one end of the room, and cross carbines (the cognisance of the regiment) in four places; but as the sword-blades could not be available until after church parade on the morrow, the men had to be contented with carefully marking the place where the sword-

blades *would* be, and finishing off the carbines, arm-racks, &c., &c.

The necessary ornamentation for the great star was carefully stowed away ; the borrowed sconces for the lights were all put in their proper places, the rubbish cleared off, the floor cleanly swept, and, before watchsetting, so complete had the arrangements been, that the chaos which had appeared overwhelming at 8 o'clock had been reduced to order.

"An' now boys," said Sally, "I'll do as I av' always done in the troop ; I'll make ye as fine a glass av' punch as ever wint down ye'r throats."

"Ah!" said Ned, "I thought so. Ye'r a good maker av' punch, Sally, whin ye *do* make id, *bud its very seldom!*"

"Don't prate," said Sally ; "the glass I'll give you just now, Nid, will be a long time overtakin' the one I made ye first."

"Ye may say that, an' tell no lie ayther," said Ned. "Make haste, Sally ; it will be lights-out in a jiffy."

So the punch disappeared, and Sally disappeared too, behind her little screen, where it was pretty plain Mr. Ned successfully endeavoured to coax another glass out of his kind-hearted spouse.

Long before "reveille" sounded in the morning Sally was afoot ; the gathering coal was smashed,

and a roaring fire burned in the grate, while the kettle "sung songs full of family glee :" and neat and tidy as if it were broad day, instead of somewhere between four and five in the morning, she, attended by her husband, went to every man in the room, and proffered—Ned the whiskey bottle, and she the cake. Every man Jack took what Ned called "the taste av' the pipe out of his mouth"—that is his glass of whiskey and her bit of cake, and wished the pair a merry Christmas, &c., and so got ready for morning stables.

[Strange as it may appear this custom had been a regimental custom from the dark ages, and any breach of it would have been regarded as rank heresy.] In honor of this Christmas Day, the "reveille" was not sounded by one trumpeter, as was usually the case when the orderly had to blow his blast alone, but by the whole strength of the trumpeters at head-quarters, which (including acting trumpeters) made a goodly muster, and the trumpet-major added to the harmony of the sounding with his piston. The call is a magnificent one at any time when well sounded, even by one man, but when you come to a dozen trumpets and a piston, it certainly is beautiful.

Off the fellows went to stables, and when the "Dismiss" sounded—there were back doors to the stables you see—it is beyond all doubt that many

of the men went to "Mary Duffy's"—she kept the canteen—and reached the barrack-room, after having paid her the compliments of the season, with more colour in their faces than usual.

However, there was the church-parade to get over and mid-day stables as well, so after having had an extra breakfast over which Sally presided—every one brought their own luxuries, and she had to cook 'em : they all fell in for church-parade, were marched to the riding-school, heard divine service, and returned for mid-day stables.

Now was the time to put the finishing touch to the decorations ! The sword-blades were displayed star-wise, the scabbards assisting in the device ; the cross carbines surmounting and flanking that, and the whole enwreathed with the sturdy holly and ivy which had been set aside the previous evening. The whole thing had a—well, healthy, jolly look about it, which made up for what artistic finish might be wanting, and it certainly could not be denied that a great deal had been made out of very little ; and as for our Sally, why she scurried about, stopping now and again to adjure the child who was roasting the "mate," having a squint at the "puddin'" which was being thoroughly boiled in an immense pot, squaring the table cloths, "settling" the knives and forks, and finally stopping to take in at a glance the effect of the whole arrangements. .

She drew herself up, apparently having arrived at the acme of her satisfaction, and shaking her head, addressed an imaginary audience in confidence.

"I may be better acquainted wid boilin' potatoes nor roastin' mate, Nance Allwright (her sworn foe), but be-gorra ye won't bate me at the atin' av ayther av them ; an' av ye have a dinner, an' a room, an' *min* like me this day, Nance, I'll ate me rigimintal hat (the helmet was of brass), and that's no butcher's mate!" Whereupon she withdrew to "clane herself" as she called it.

Mid-day stables did not extend over the regulated time on Christmas Day.

In point of fact the usual duration was considerably shortened, and almost before the troop sergeant-major had returned from seeing that the troop-rooms were "all square," the captain was ready to go round the stables, having received the orderly sergeant's report that the troop was all "present and regular," forage having been drawn in the morning under the supervision of the orderly officer.

When the sergeant-major saluted his captain, he was agreeably surprised to be presented with an envelope addressed to himself, which, by the feel of it, he afterwards remarked was "crumply."

The captain told him he could open it at his leisure, and he (the sergeant-major) was disposed

to think that this day of all days in the year was rather a red letter one in his calendar than otherwise, for he had received the irrigational benefits of sundry bottles of port and sherry, and an avalanche of cake, from his subalterns early in the forenoon.

"I don't think the other troops are ready, sir," he said to his captain. "I see the orderly officer waiting about, would you like to go round the rooms before the stables?"

"Certainly, come along; he called his subs, and off they started.

"The rooms are all very nice, sir, but No. 1 squad —Mrs. Hogarty's—is very tasty." (One would have thought the sergeant-major had been tasting it!)

"Ah!" said the captain, she's a good woman that. My wife is sending her up some wonderful preparations to-day, but it strikes me the men will fall in for most of the good things; she's very jolly I'm told."

The sergeant-major vowed she was with all his might, and with that they reached the room, which really did credit to the exertions of their men.

"By Jove!" said the captain;—

Sally curtsied, the children, in their best bib and tucker did the same, and Ned disappeared behind the screen from whence emanated a strong whiff as of a whiskey barrel, which would lead any one to suppose that Ned, honest man, had been looking at

somebody drinking ! (You see he had no stables to go to.)

The captain and his subs walked round the room. Everything in beautiful order ; beds nicely made up ; clothing packed symmetrically on shelves ; arms, accoutrements and all the personal paraphernalia of a soldier—bar what had been used up in the construction of the star—as bright as willing hands and brawny arms could make them. Satisfaction expressed—nothing *could* be better.

The other three rooms visited, all clean and tidy, with some attempt at decoration—but nothing at all to be compared, to Sally's. •

“ You should have begun here ” said the captain to the sergeant-major, and ended with No. 1 ; left that for the climax. There’s nothing like No. 1. Let’s go to Croker’s troop.”

He hailed Captain Croker, and said he would go round with him.

As usual everything was strictly regimental, but no attempt at decoration had been made, and it was with no small pride that our captain boasted of *his* troop-rooms, and the industry and taste of his men.

While they were talking the “ office-call ” sounded, and off they all went to see the chief.

In pursuance of an old regimental custom, he called for the drill report, and eliminated therefrom all the defaulters, remitting their drill or the balance

thereof, and releasing from the cells such prisoners as *he* had sent there himself, and forgiving those who had to be brought before him that day, unless their crimes had been very heinous indeed. Then he intimated his intention of going round the rooms, and then gave his orders for the following day, and ordered the orderly-room to be closed and the clerks to disperse, which they did "like winking." He went round the stables, and to give the men time to square up after leaving them, he had not got out of one stable to another until he waved his hand to the orderly officer, who waved his hand to the orderly sergeant, who waved in his turn to the trumpeter ; the "Dismiss" was sounded, and the men flocked out of stables.

[I am afraid some of them went to Mary Duffy's, but this by the way.] And he went round the remainder of the stables, attended by the officers and the sergeants-major of troops only.

When he reached the last of all he held up his hand again, and then the usual manual telegraphing took place and the dinner trumpet sounded. So they all streamed across the yard to the barrack-rooms, and he commenced his tour.

Now, the men had smartened themselves up for the occasion, and it was by no means a sight to be despised—seven smart fellows in scarlet and white facings sitting on each side of the table—snowy

cloth—Christmas fare—Christmas behaviour—by Jove ! Christmas everywhere—the very air was Christmasified ! In some of the rooms the oldest soldier wished the colonel and officers the “compliments of the sayson !” “An’ I’m sorry, sur,” said Dempsey, “it’s not ivery day in the week instead av once a year.”

The chief laughed and passed on ; but the great triumph of all was reserved for Sally.

“Av ye plase, me deer,” said Ellen Adams, spitefully, after all was over, “me lady had all the childer in a row on the big box—the purtiest next the door, where the kurnel wud be sure to see her. An’, me deer, she had a tray, an’ a finger thing-i-my-jig on id, an’ two decanters av ye plase, an’ another plate with another—arrah bother the name av’ id, wid cake an’ id ! An’ port an’ sherry’ no less in id ! An’ says Nid, says he, as bould as brass, kurnel, says he, we drank yer health and a merry Christmas this mornin’, an’ we drank the captain’s and the young gentlemen’s too ; and now, sur, said Nid, (dy’e mind the cheek av him !), we hope you’ll do us the honor av’ drinkin’ a sup, an’ brakin’ a crust wid No. 1 squad of the saynior troop av the regiment. An’, me deer, the ould fellow (the colonel she meant) filled his glass wid port, an’ be dad he drank Sally’s health an’ the childer’s furst, then the captain’s, and then the min’s, and said the room

was *beautiful!* and the captain he drank, an' there they wor for ten minutes before they left the place—an' whisper—the mistress sent a ham and a turkey to the squad (she sent one each to them all), and may I never av, I don't think Sally had the most of id.

"Beautiful! be-gorra the room was like a green-grocer's shop widout the potatoes.

"I didn't see any beauty about id. Did you, Nance?"

"Don't bother," said Nance. "Sally has taken the coal off all our pipes!"

This was Mrs. Adams's version of the story and it was very nearly correct: the chief expressed himself highly pleased, the captain was delighted, and the dinner was eaten with such an appetite as good digestion waits on.

There was a small barrel of beer which had also been sent for the refection of the squad, but which Sally, with a wholesome dread of Ned's proclivities, had deposited in the troop store-room, and which was not tapped till dinner.

After the edibles had been disposed of, the two barrack tables were relegated to the top end of the room, and, as near as could be demonstrated by barrack benches, a circle was formed round what Ned called a "rousing" fire, and the men proceeded to enjoy themselves after their own particular fashion.

There had been a mighty banquet in the sergeants'

mess, and after that was over a visit was paid them by the troop sergeant-major, who joined in their festivities for a brief space, and then betook himself to his own quarters.

There was much gratulation and much unanimity of sentiment among the squad present. The men on duty were not forgotten either, but had their fill of the good things taken to them by their comrades.

Men who all the year round systematically contradicted each other, fraternised upon this Christmas Day ; and if any *habitue* of opera-houses and lover of sweet sounds had been present, he would have heard something which would rather have astonished him in the way of “splitting the ears of the groundlings.” The songs sung, as a rule, were of almost interminable length, with a chorus which was quite as long as the song, being generally a repetition of the verse which had been rendered by the solo singer. “Pauddeen Roo”—“The German Legion that lay in Tullamore”—to the singing of which, as regards style, one gentleman objected on the ground that it wanted “more of the nose—” that is to say that the singer didn’t snivel enough.

His ideas of music were singular, do you see, and the songs were all of that description, concluding with “My Name is Bould Kelly.”

And when the beer was finished they had punch, and then it was time for evening stables, but that

was a brief interval, and when the men came back, Sally had provided a second edition of the dinner to which ample justice was done, and after that more punch and then "lights-out," and to bed.

These days came like angels' visits to the men. They work wonderfully for good in regiments. They bind men and officers more closely together, and form a link in the chain of *esprit de corps* which is not easily broken.

A shabby captain, now, and how many there are (willingly and unwillingly no doubt) would have had crime in his troop next morning ; there was none in ours, and the remembrance of that, and a few other Christmas Days in the troop spoken of have never been forgotten, and will never be, until the thirty years ago shall have increased to—who knows how many ?



## CHAPTER XXIII.

### HOW THE VICTORIA CROSS WAS WON.

THE writer of these lines had often asked the old lancer to relate the wonderful adventures "by flood and field," which had entitled him to the high honor and distinction he possessed of wearing the cross of VICTORIA upon his "manly buzzum." But the old gentleman, with an accession of modesty which is new alike to his countrymen and himself, always evaded the question, and contented himself with remarking that what he had done required no personal illustration as good wine needed no bush ; "and," said he, "I don't see how, when there are so many other subjects at least to keep you going, that you should fall back upon *me*!"

"My venerated friend," said I, "don't say fall back upon *you*! You are a very Proteus ; in how many forms and shapes have you already made your appearance in this compendium of truth ; and how many tricks of your own have been given to the world as the tricks of other people ! Come now ! Let us have the story without more bother. It surely must be something worth the listening to—or quite the other way !"

"Thank ye for nothin'," said he, "with your 'quite the other way.' You know it wasn't *that* way any how."

"You have got the cross," I made answer. "You are public property to a certain extent, and I think you might tell us the story."

And thus he fired away :—

"I need not particularise the story of the Mutiny of 1857, which has been so often recounted by far more able *raconteurs* than myself. Nor need I say what happened before Delhi, for *you* were there, and participated in what was going on in the way of both rough and smooth—although rough was the smoothest of it"—and here he chuckled at the recollection. "Such a season for heat has seldom been seen before or since, and I many times wondered how *you fellows* stood the racket, so short a time in the country. But I must tell you of a surprise we had on the 7th of June when my troop happened to be the advance main picquet. We had a couple of guns with us, and of course we were all that was between the little army which was behind us at Alipore—(had been gathering odds and ends for three or four days, and were under orders, as we well knew, to advance on Delhi in three columns on the following morning, the 8th June, at daybreak) and the savage and cowardly blackguards in front of us! Well, sir, we had passed the night

the best way we could, and had no other or greater alarm than was created by ourselves—for we were always jolly—day was just breaking when the Brigade Major galloped up to the front. He satisfied himself that all was *selon les regle* with the picquet and the guns, and took a ‘preliminary canter’ about 500 or 600 yards up the road in front of us and the videttes, halted, took out his little field-glass and reconnoitred the country round. Suddenly he returned the glass to its case—and wheeling his horse round, he came back to the picquet at a rattling gallop, and as soon as he was near enough he drew his sword—ordered us to mount—the guns were limbered up—we got the order to advance, and away we started at a rush ! honors, medals ! crosses of VICTORIA and commissions without number looming in the future. “Halt ! action front,” and in a moment the artillery were ready to blaze away at an (apparently) large body of the enemy’s cavalry about to cross the road on which we were, but the distance was considered too great for our fire to be effectual with grape ; and we limbered up and again advanced at a tearing pace. There was no necessity to hasten the men to the front ! Every soul there really was “in arms and eager for the fray.” Again we halted and prepared to receive the enemy who came on straightway, apparently not taking the slightest notice of our

dash and presence ! And we attributed the carelessness on their part to their confidence in numbers, for *we* were but a picquet and a couple of guns—*they* covered half a mile of ground. The artillery were about to fire, and the word was passed for the men to hold their horses well together and we would be at the double-dyed villains as soon as the dust cleared away. All was ready ; we straining like hounds in leash, the gunners', port-fire in hand, only awaited the mandate. We could form no estimate of what arm of the service the rebels belonged to except that by the rapidity of movement we took them for cavalry ; and there we sat clutching our lance-poles and eagerly longing for a dash at them to afford us an opportunity of avenging the massacre of our countrymen and women ! The Brigade Major rode a little to the front so as to have a clearer and better view, and every one was screwed up to the highest pitch of expectation, when suddenly he wheeled his horse about and galloped towards us ! Instead of being ordered to advance we got the word “limber up—three’s about —tro—o—t !” and back we went, only to meet the supports which had been ordered up, and many officers who had volunteered to join in the expected *mélée*. Our picquet was relieved—and we went back to camp !”

“ Well ? ” asked L.

"Well?" said the old man; "yes," "we went back to camp!"

"Without firing a shot, or having a dash at them?"

"Just so," said the old man.

"Some of our own troops coming to join the camp I suppose?"

"Not a bit of troop."

"Then, what in the name of wonder, was all the *tumasha* about," asked I.

"Um!" said he, "just give me that decanter, the thought of it makes me dry yet!"

"What was it you saw," I persisted.

"Ah!" said the venerable old brickdustian, "*it was a drove of buffaloes!*"

"That was a sell."

"Yes indeed; *I would much rather have been selling the buffaloes!* However, if you interrupt me like this we will never be done."

Promising to interrupt him no more than was necessary, he continued—

"We marched from Alipore on the morning of the 8th of June before dawn. The whole of our little force advanced in three columns on a place called Budle-ke-serai, where the enemy were in great force.

"It was a splendid position; if the vagabonds had only had the pluck, they might have

held it against all comers for ever and a day! Against any other army in the world than the *Avengers!* That's what we were my dasher! You will see that the remark I am about to make has not much novelty about it, but it has the great recommendation of truth. These cowardly rascals were only fit for butchering women and children, or potting fellows from behind stone walls, but in the open, with the cold steel near them they were done for!

“Sir Hope Grant took us and some guns by the banks of the canal to attack their left flank, and after surmounting some difficulties in the way of deep ditches, &c., which we had to cross—when we got over *them* we caught sight of Mr. Jack Pandy! You talk about stemming the torrent of an Alpine stream! You might as well attempt to divert the Hooghly's course as have kept *us* back *then*. The cheer—rather the roar we gave, drowned the report of the guns! No word “charge” was given, but at it we went, officers and men, with a will. We routed them cavalry, infantry and artillery, from their extreme left to their extreme right! Their infantry, certainly, when they got out of reach of the lance-points, faced about and emptied some of our saddles. But man dear! there was some beautiful pelting! Captain St. George Anson cut—one—two—three as fast nearly as you could count them; and down went a rebel at every sweep of his wea-

pon ! I tell you sir, it was clean cutting, and no doubt at all about it.

“ Fighting Yule” left specimens of his handiwork upon several of the gentry ; and what is somewhat remarkable, neither of these two officers, although riding in front of the squadron, and in the very thickest of the fight, received a scratch, although several who were immediately behind them got knocked over.

“ As soon as we cleared the mass, we wheeled about to charge back over the same ground when an A.-D.-C. came tearing up to say that we would be under the fire of our own infantry if we attempted such a move, and we were ordered to halt on the flank.

Just then, the smoke having partially cleared away, I saw Harry Helstone, a sergeant of ours, dismounted, about 200 yards off, defending himself as best he could against no end of Jack sepoys ! I didn’t wait to count them, but galloped out of the ranks followed by some others in hopes of saving him, but a roar from “ fighting Yule” who did not see on what errand the men were bent—as he was facing the troop—brought all my following chums back to the ranks, leaving your humble servant—who did not choose to hear the order given to return—but rode straight at, and turned over a couple of pandies and got hold of Helstone and brought him

in, all right, under a heavy fire. That, me friend, was number one for the V. C., although it was little I was thinking of *that* at the time, for I was bent on saving a comrade and ‘polishing off’ some of our sable friends. I wasn’t even thinking of the bullets whistling round us, man, and they have a very peculiar way of making their presence known—haven’t they? Well, sir, Lieutenant Goldie galloped out to meet us, and handed his flask to the wounded man, for which act the troop gave him as hearty a cheer as ever came from English throats!

“Did he hand *you* the bottle?” asked I.

“Deed and he didn’t,” said the old fellow, “but to tell you the truth, *I was wishin’ he had; for wasn’t I dry!*”

“The colonel (Yule) said nothing when I re-joined the troop ; and although he looked crooked enough, I know he would willingly have performed a similar action himself, being a thorough soldier, kind of heart, sharp of word and hand, and as fearless as he was cool in action. He was killed in a skirmish on the 19th, on which occasion he led the picquets to the charge and again displayed his excellent qualities as a commander. He actually held thousands of the enemy in check, with only a picquet, till Sir Hope Grant came up with supports ; then he delivered a most successful charge right at the enemy and drove them back completely ; but we

lost as brave an officer as ever led a squadron to the charge. We were nearly losing that great and good man Sir Hope Grant on the same occasion, but the gallantry of two of our men, Hancock and Purcell, and a sowar named Rooper Khan, extricated him from the midst of the enemy.

"Captain Daly of the Guides, led his men in a most daring manner, cutting down all before them and leaving numerous tracks to indicate the route they had taken. This accomplished and gallant officer was severely wounded on that occasion also ; still we had some fine fellows left, Hodson, Gough, Watson, Nicolson, Probyn, Younghusband and others, who were hosts in themselves ! Only let such men lead us, and believe me, old boy, the British soldier will do his duty ", said the old lancer.

"What about Helstone," asked I.

"He," said the old fellow, "is alive and well. When I went home to England, he collected as many of the old hands as he could find, and we dined and spent the evening in Falcon Square, fighting our battles over again till the small hours saw about 30 dilapidated warriors filing off to their respective occupations. But I don't think they did much work that day !

"Well, sir, number two came about in this wise. You remember us leaving you behind in Delhi before you marched with Showers into the dis-

tricts? We started with a flying column through a country swarming with mutineers and rebels who had escaped from Delhi. Our force was commanded by Brigadier Greathed, a regular fire-eater! He was a man, sir, that every soldier in the column would have died for! Some men are made soldiers after they join, but Greathed was a born soldier! I have heard it said that he was hasty; but belonging to the Napier and Gough school, that officer gained a victory while another man would have been casting about him for ways and means to commence an attack! I won't be long-winded with you, but I will say *this*: that little column advanced from Delhi to Agra *by battles in succession!* We literally fought our way day after day, and half the credit due to the great man who commanded us *has* never, and *will* never, be given!

"At Bolundshuhur he sent us to charge the blaguards as he called the enemy; it was done in the old lancer style, three of our officers got wounded, which was a sore loss to us just then, as they could not be replaced, and they were men who had led us in many a struggle and we knew their worth; soldiers soon find that out.

"Drysdale, Sarel and Blair were worth their weight in gold; not a man in the regiment that would not have risked his life to save them, they were beloved by all, but then it's the fortune of war

and there was no help for it—Johnny Pandy had to be thrashed ! so we thrashed him ! and went to breakfast and dinner too, and faith an iligant dinner it was —roast goose with onion sauce.”

At this I laughed.

“ Laugh away me friend,” said the old man, “ but the devil a word of a lie in it. After hunting the Pandies a few miles, we were returning, when we saw any number of the feathered tribe on their native ilimint, as comfortable and cool as if there had been no hot work going on so near them. The owners having disappeared with Johnny, we thought it a pity such beautiful birds should be left to die of starvation, and to save them as it were from such a death, we had some pistol practice and the result was—roast goose for dinner. I’d go through another Bolundshuhur for such another dinner as I had that day ! ”

“ You would be a goose if you did,” said I.

“ It was not every day that we got roast goose, mind you, but we were not badly off for all that ; we had our rations regularly, but somehow the grog was always behind, and the camp invariably pitched before the stuff arrived ; this delay was the cause of some grumbling, till one morning we were all surprised at seeing Peter on the ground as we dismounted ; it was a pleasant surprise to us, and various were the conjectures why it was so : but no clue could be obtained just then.

"News, however, reached us soon after, that our sick and wounded had been attacked by a strong body of cavalry from the rear, but were driven off by the baggage guard.

"That accounts for the milk av the cocoanut," shouted Corporal Hennessy, "that's why we got our grog this morning so early ;" at which there was a general laugh.

"On the 10th October we arrived at Agra, there we found that the 3rd Europeans and about 5,000 Christians were belated in the fort. The mutineers had burned down all the barracks, public and private buildings ; the churches had been sacked, and even the graves desecrated. The whole of the jail population had been loosened from their bonds, and joined by *budmashes* from far and near, murder and robbery (besides other atrocities) were rife, and no one was safe who favoured our rule.

"A force of about 12,000 rebels was known to be in the vicinity, chiefly composed of mutineers from Neemuch, Nusseerabad, Gondah, Goonah and other places, who had concentrated all their forces for the purpose of making a descent upon Agra.

"Just imagine the state ofoaffairs on our arrival ! We had fought three engagements day-after-day at Bolundshuhur, Malaghur and Allyghur, and had made a forced march of forty-four miles in eight and twenty hours into the bargain !

"Well, sir, the camp was hardly pitched, when four mutineers, disguised as *tom-tom-wallahs*, came strolling along the front of our camp. They had passed four, and were at the head of the fifth troop, when Sergeant Crews detected what he thought a sword-hilt peeping out from under a fellow's *chudder*. Crews went up to him, lifted the cloth, and there sure enough was a *tulwar*! In the twinkling of an eye all four drew and made at poor Crews! I was standing about 12 yards off, waiting for the *bhis-tee* coming round, and without thinking about being unarmed, I sprang to Crews' assistance, who by this time was in the midst of them. I caught the first man I could come at; hit him such a 'dowse' in the mouth as must have made him fancy a horse kicked him; wrenched the *tulwar* out of his hand and defended myself from the ferocious attacks of the other three, killing one and wounding two. The fellow whom I had disarmed thinking discretion the better part of valour was showing a leg to escape, but as he was jumping over a tent rope, Corporal Stanley gave him 'one for his nob,' and we scored the four of them!"

"But I did not get off scot-free. These vagabonds took a slice clean off my forehead and left a hole about the size of the palm of your hand (not a bit larger) in my Irish head! No end of bones have come out since, and show me the man who will say

after that, *that I had nothing in my head !* That's not all, sir ; I was scored, sir, like a spare rib of pork all over the arms. The blows were aimed at my head, but I warded them off with my arms until I got hold of the hilt of the fellow's sword and then—I made tracks ! Well, sir, after this the guns of the enemy, concealed in some corn fields, opened fire and raked the camp. *Their* cavalry rushed on to our guns, and all was confusion. Our men turned out as they were—some in shirt sleeves, some mounted without saddles. Led by Captain French and Lieutenant Jones, they charged the enemy, retook the guns, and kept them at bay until our men could come properly into action. Poor French was killed, and Jones got dreadfully mangled, receiving no less than twenty-one wounds.

" I did not share, as you may suppose, in the remainder of that day's fight, which was a most brilliant affair. I was sent to hospital to have my wounds dressed. Poor Helstone ! he was the first to come to me, tore the *puggree* off his cap, converted it into a bandage for my bleeding head, got a dooly and packed me off.

" We had proceeded no further than the ball-alley, when there was a rush, owing to some of the enemy's cavalry making their appearance. Down went the dooly, and away, of course, went the bearers ! I scrambled out the best way I

could, arming myself with a pistol which Helstone had fortunately left with me, and Jack sepoy's *tulwar*. There was, luckily for me, a gap in a wall close by the spot where the dooly bearers had thought proper to deposit me, and I made my way through, and was joined by two wounded infantry men who had also been abandoned by their dooly bearers. We three unfortunates expected to be attacked, and two of us unarmed ! I handed the pistol to one—kept the *tulwar* myself, and the other man armed himself with brick-bats—and there we stood prepared to defend the ‘imminent deadly breach.’

“ However, the enemy passed us, and one of the poor fellows who had kept up bravely when there was danger, as soon as it and the excitement had passed, dropped the pistol, quietly lay down, and before assistance could be called—died. I saw him put in a dooly and sent away, and finding myself getting weak from loss of blood, I made the best of my way to the fort. I met the 3rd Europeans advancing at the double to the *mélée*. They inclined left and right and allowed me to pass through their ranks. I am sure the sight of me incited them to greater speed. The bandage had fallen off ; my shirt sleeves were tucked up above the elbow ; braces tied round my waist, and I was literally covered with blood. I must have presented

a curious appearance. The 3rd shouted as they passed me—it was the last sound I heard, for I fainted from weakness—that ‘they would avenge me !’ And I dare say they did ! I know I hoped they would !

“And,” said the brave old fellow, “*when I came to myself* I was in hospital snug enough, and comfortable enough, and you know our lines lay in pleasant places *then*. You remember how the ladies of Agra nursed us there ? They were the successors of the many corps of nurses which have sprung up ; the followers of the Florence Nightingales of the Crimean days, and that, sir—that little skirmish with the *tom-tom-wallahs*, was number two of the reasons why I write Victoria Cross after my name !”

“Long may you wear it,” said I.

“Amin !” said he, “*whether yer jokin’ or not.* It must be a poor parson that can’t afford a clerk.”

“When did you receive the cross ?” I asked.

“The presentation took place on the 24th December 1860. All the troops in the garrison paraded on the glacis. They formed three sides of a square ; you should have been there to hear all the fine things that where said on the occasion—sure it was sufficient to upset a man’s modesty !”

“Particularly an Irishman’s,” said I.

“They say that the shamrock will not allow that plant to grow in my country barring among the

women ; it becomes them any how : as for the boys though they may be rakish and wild, they never show their back to friend or foe. Well, sir, as I was about to say when you put in your oar, though there was no room to pull, Lady Hearsey said, ‘the Cross of Valor so highly prized by those who possess it, so courted by those whose opportunity for its presentation has not yet arrived, is not given as a reward for *courage only*, but to the intrepid character that *combines coolness with valor*, and above all to that impulse of a noble heart which spares not itself to rescue a wounded officer or fallen comrade.’

“Arrah ! man, them words would make a man go through a mile of pandies,” said the veteran excitedly. “Sir John commenced then ! He said :—

‘I congratulate you on your securing the insignia of bravery so highly prized by all true and gallant soldiers, so ardently desired and sought for by the noblest men of your country. The Cross of Victoria has been presented to you before your officers and your comrades by Lady Hearsey ; long may you live to wear it with honor, and may this gracious token of your valorous deeds presented to you in the name of your Gracious Sovereign, our beloved Queen, descend to your children’s children unsullied—that they may emulate, when occasion calls for it, in the service of the Queen and country, the heroic conduct of their parent.’

"The line was then formed and the gallant old general placed himself (where he had so often been before when hard-fighting was the order of the day) in front of it, gave the word "open order" and a general salute in honor of the receivers (for there were three of us) of the Victoria Cross, which was done in prime style.

"The Honorable Mr. Harington was the first to shake me by the hand, and after that I thought my arm would be dislocated by reason of the shaking it got !

"Now you know all about the cross, and much good the knowledge may do you ! "

We joined in a solemn "quencher," and then I left the wounded warrior.



## CHAPTER XXIV.

SHOWING HOW IF THE TROOPS AT AGRA HAD BUSINESS FIRST—THEY HAD NO LACK OF PLEASURE AFTERWARDS.

“MINE ancient friend,” said I to the old ‘round parry and St. George’, complete your work, and tell us of the grand doings during your stay at Agra which were chronicled in the news of the day, or I am much mistaken.”

“How can you expect a man” said the lancer, “with eleven pieces of his cranium bleaching on the plains (or may be gone before him to that valley you know of) to remember all that took place twenty years ago? You *have* a conscience!”

I allowed the remark to go unanswered, and the old fellow fired off as follows :—

“It appears that long before our column arrived at Agra the ladies of that station had formed themselves into a committee of ways and means, a thing which they always do before coming trials as if by intuition, and thinking that if there was any fighting—a thing not at all unlikely—there would be wounded, and as there was no hospital, the ladies sent a deputation to the officer in command of the garrison on the subject.

“He, good man, most willingly conceded their

requests ; had his heart been of adamant he could hardly have resisted the angelic creatures on such a heavenly mission, and the Moti Musjid, the coolest building in the fort, was made over to them for this humane purpose, and was soon converted into a military hospital.

“The ladies of Agra excelled in kindness all I have ever known, and long will their benevolence on this occasion be remembered, not only by those who are yet the survivors of those troublous times, but by the posterity who hear from those who saw their self-sacrifice, and experienced the benefit of ministrations when sick and wounded.

“They collected not only clothing, bedding and provisions, but in fact every thing was got in readiness that an hospital was likely to require, and such a staff of medical officers, by Jove ! were never before collected in one building.

“There was Doctor Farquhar, who would make you laugh while in the greatest agony ; the gentle Doctor Christison, who would amputate a man’s leg while he was sleeping, and others.

“And they did their work well, as many still living can vouch for ; all were kind and attentive, but the above-named gentlemen were *my* medical attendants, and a good right I have to remember their skill and the kindness of the lady-nurses.” Here the old man paused, *covered the bottom of his glass*, passed

the bottle to me, and as soon as I had helped myself he continued.—“ Had it not been for them the old lancer would not be here to drink their health,” and suiting the action to the word the old fellow drained his glass. I was not slow in following the good example set me by the man of many scars, who commenced afresh :—

“ The ladies were all angels unawares. When you opened your eyes in the morning the first thing you saw was the smiling face of one of them with a cordial or delicacy in her hand, or something that she knew you would like ; and when after having “ done justice ” you would thank her for the luxury, how pleased she would be as if you had done her a kindness instead of her bestowing it on you ! Faith I think we did not show sufficient gratitude, nor could we had we even tried it, for theirs was the mission of mercy and we were all the recipients of their kindness, and he would be a bad man indeed who did not feel and acknowledge this.

“ Nothing I ever read of could exceed their unwearied devotion, and I can only regret my lack of ability as a historian to depict it as it should be depicted.

“ There was one lady who undertook the care of Lieutenant Jones ; his case was the worst of all. the bad cases that had come into hospital, as he had twenty-one wounds, and there was very little hope entertained of his ultimate recovery. No-

thing daunted, however, this noble-hearted Christian Englishwoman (*she ought to have been Irish!*) undertook the work of mercy, and HEAVEN was pleased to crown her efforts with success, and another of our brave officers is alive and well. The lady alluded to was the late lamented Mrs. Nicolls, wife of Major-General Nicolls. Had Lieutenant Jones been of her nearest kin this noble-hearted couple could not have done more than they did for the wounded man; nor has he forgotten, I warrant, their unwearied care and attention to him in the hospital of the Moti Musjid, for he was as kind as he was stout of heart."

"All your officers were that," I observed to the old lancer.

"True," said he, "they were the men who never said 'go on men—' it was 'come on men,' just so," and he continued. "I had good reason to be grateful also to that lady and captain (the rank he then held) Captain Chalmers of the Commissariat was another friend in need. God bless his jolly face, he never came empty-handed. I tell you," said the old man warmly "that I could go on from now till morning and then would not finish yarn-ing of half what was done for us. I will not trouble you with any more of the names of the fair nurses—though they are still dear to me and ever shall be. It is enough to say that all were

exceedingly kind,—where every one worked with a will, the work was done well ; and in the Moti Musjid, there being so many, the work was comparatively light except for poor Benson who had charge of the dispensary. Day and night he was afoot, and the surgeons' orders were executed with willingness and punctuality. Who shall describe the arduous nature of the duties which Benson voluntarily undertook ? He gained golden opinions from all and great praise from the medical staff.

“ Well, sir, all were as jolly as it was possible for sick and wounded men to be. The band of the 3rd Yeos's discoursed sweet music in the evening, and at night the songsters of the provost guard (which were stationed at the gate) trilled forth their sweetest notes.

“ This guard was composed of Christian drummers from the different regiments which had mutinied, but who had made their way to Agra. Most of them were married men with families ; were well-behaved and hard-working, and having lost their all, were in consequence very badly off till the ladies of Agra relieved them.

“ A most laughable occurrence took place one fine evening, and I would fail altogether in my established character of yarn-spinner did I omit to mention it :—

“ The Agra Volunteers had done good service ; but now that danger was over, the men imagined

they would take it easy, and when a parade was ordered very few of that gallant corps was to be seen. Order after order had been disregarded, till at length Colonel Hennessy was compelled to issue orders "to have all absentees arrested," and placed in durance vile. The provost sergeant and his guard had the execution of these orders entrusted to them. The cool and soldier-like deportment of these men was admirable while executing this disagreeable duty. They "screwed their courage to the sticking place" for so desperate an undertaking. The stern determination depicted in each face at once convinced the culprit that he had to deal with men who would do their duty—or die.

"Numerous were the arrests in consequence. A gentleman who, it was known, always carried a dagger about him was on the roll of absentees which had been handed to the provost sergeant.

'Ah!' exclaimed that undividual, shaking his head, 'how are we to manage here.' A *Punchayet Anglais* was held, and after a long consultation, it was decided to inveigle him into the jaws of the Philistines, when the guard were to pounce on him, secure their prize, and yet, faith, it was the old story of counting the chickens before they were hatched.

"The heroic provost sergeant, who was an adept at such work, and who prided himself on his

accomplishments, started on the trail of the delinquent and discovered him in his snug retreat amidst a numerous company of friends who had assembled to witness his betrothal to his young lady-love (for even *then* there was time for love-making) and it was from this gay scene the bridegroom elect was to be ignominiously dragged. The sergeant chuckled to himself at the *finesse* of his plan to entrap the gallant volunteer as he told him that he was urgently required at the Moti Musjid, and without any misgiving he accompanied him. When safely in the guard-room he was told he was a prisoner.

“‘What !’ cried he, ‘you thundering hangman ! you make me a prisoner,’ and out came the dagger, away went the sergeant and after him the whole of the guard, helter-skelter, head-over-heels down the stone stairs and away for bare life ! Out rushed the women screaming ‘murder,’ they—poor things—thinking that the mutineers were on them, rushed frantically into the hospital for protection, and the sick and wounded, not knowing what all the row was about, prepared to sell their lives dearly to any number of rebels who chose to purchase at the price ! But there were no rebels except about fifty who were all in irons, with one solitary European as guard.

“Now this irate gentleman who had caused all the hubbub was the beforementioned volunteer. There

he stood, firelock in hand, the stock of which was broken and the barrel bent (which caused Corporal Hennessy to observe, ‘that it was an illigant gun for shootin’ round the corner !).’ It belonged to one of the guard who had made himself scarce ! The volunteer was smiling at the ridiculous scene ; but he soon had other work to do, the fifty prisoners (mutineers) were in irons in the square of the Moti Musjid, many of whom were to pass through the provost sergeant’s hands (for hanging purposes) the following morning, they having committed the most atrocious crimes of that bloodstained period. Seeing the guard decamp, they thought they would make an effort for freedom, could they but get freed from their fetters, and taking possession of the arms left by the guard, their liberty,—which to them meant robbery and murder had they succeeded.

“One desperate ruffian had got one leg free of the iron and was in the act of breaking the other, when a *broad (sword) hint* from the undaunted volunteer caused him to desist.

“After a little while the panic-stricken guard returned, and a more sheep-faced lot of poor devils was never seen ! They were heartily ashamed of their conduct, and some of them did good service subsequently, when led by such distinguished officers as Meade and Cockburn, officers under whom it was an honor to serve.

"The volunteer, having been released he was allowed to depart. It was a mistake that his name was given to the sergeant ; true it was he did not attend parade, being at the time on the hospital books from a wound received in action, on which occasion he performed prodigies of valour, and for which he was deservedly held in high repute. The whole matter was allowed to rest—the sergeant thanking his stars that he got off so cheaply, registered a vow to keep clear of all foreigners for the term of his natural life.

"As the men recovered they left the hospital, but how were we to show our gratitude to our fair nurses for all they had done for us ? that was the question to be solved. At length it was decided that a pic-nic to the ladies at the Taj was what would suit every one's fancy.

"I," said the ould fellow proudly, "being elected, with full power to carry out the affair, my first move was to secure the band of the 3rd Europeans, and a ladies' committee of management. Messrs. Vansittart, Raikes and Mathews kindly consented to act, and all was plain-sailing. Invitations were issued for two hundred ; more were asked for and more were given, still the cry was more, more, till nearly everyone in the fort had obtained them. All was stir and bustle ; never before were tailors and *dhabies* in such demand in any station in the N.-W. P. !

Boats were secured for all who wished to go by water, Mr. Polites kindly lending his small steamer for that purpose. There were also conveyances, from the smart barouche down to a Muttra ekka setting down their occupants at the Taj gate. From early morning, the road and river were alive with all the beauty which had so long been hid within the fortress, and the brave fellows who they had cared for in the hour of need were about to show that often a noble heart beats under the rough jacket of a soldier. There, "said the old lancer, handing me a very old manuscript" read that my boy, and say if the pic-nic was a success; yes or no?"

The following is an account of the pic-nic :—

"The Taj was witness to a very gay scene, on Wednesday last, on the occasion of a pic-nic given by the non-commissioned officers and soldiers of H. M.'s 9th Lancers who were left at Agra on account of the wounds they received on the 10th October last, and who, to mark their gratitude to the fair nurses who so assiduously attended them, gave this delightful party.

"It has seldom been our lot to witness a more merry and happy gathering—all appeared fully to enjoy themselves and were loth to part, and sure are we that this day will be treasured by all our fair countrywomen, who took part in the entertainment, as the oasis in the midst of their weary existence of the last six months in the fort of Agra.

"It would not be fair in us to chronicle all that we may have seen from the quiet retreat of our snug corner, but we noticed with pleasure the many approving smiles and glances bestowed by the fair dames on our gallant hosts for the manner in which they had

done their "devoirs" in the field, and the many lances they had splintered in their defence ; and never, we are sure, had knight of old more reason to be proud of the appreciation in which his deeds of arms were held ; but we sincerely trust that in endeavouring to heal the wounds of the body, the fair nurses may not have created other wounds more difficult to heal though probably more pleasant to bear."

"He was right in that any how," put in the old lancer, looking at the good woman that owns him—but her mind seemed to be at that moment occupied in counting the stitches on the needles in her hand.

"There was some ground for the remark?" I observed.

"Ground! *Acres*, me dasher! Wasn't there Katherine, me deer?" to the mistress.

"That lady wanted some wool of a different shade, which happened to be in another room, and hurried off to fetch it ("with a smile on her lip but *no* tear in her eye") at which the old man laughed heartily.

As soon as his hilarity subsided he passed the bottle, observing "reading is dry work; take a taste and go on."

Knowing that obedience is the first duty of a soldier, and he being my senior officer, I did as I was ordered; and after performing the first part of the order to the old chap's satisfaction, I took up the "*genuine*" report of the pic-nic as my ancient friend the lancer called it and read aloud :—

"The company assembled about midday, when the usual amusements of a pic-nic occupied them, enlivened by the dulcet strains of the Band of the 3rd Europeans, till the hour of refec-tion was announced ; the tiffin was most sumptuous, and would have done credit to Gunter, and indeed to us it seemed astounding how such delicacies could have been collected.

"After due time had been given to the honors of the table Sergeant Hartigan of the 9th Lancers proposed the following toast, which does credit to his heart and head. The speech was delivered in a most feeling and affecting manner, the proof of which might have been found in the many lovely eyes we observed dimmed with tears "Beauty's tribute to Valor."

"Ladies and Gentlemen—I rise in the name of my brothers-in-arms, to thank you for all the kind attention you have shewn us in honoring this place with your presence. My heart, I need scarcely state, is too full when I attempt to express the deep feeling that rises uppermost ; but suffice it to say that, your unwearied attention on our *sick and wounded* has engrafted the deepest feelings in the soldiers' heart which death alone can obliterate.

"It will be an event to look back to : should the fortunes of war compel us to experience the hardships of another *hot season* under canvas, with what pleasure will we relate to our *young comrades* the many acts of kindness received at your *hands*, that it may cheer them in the *charge* and at the *deadly breach*, well knowing that if they have the good fortune to be wounded, there are Miss Nightingales and Sisters of Charity ready to give their lady-like assistance in alleviating their suffering.

- "I say good fortune; *well*, it must be a fortunate event that brings those ministering 'Angels' to the side of the disabled soldier's cot to raise the cup to his parched and burning lips, and pour balm on his perhaps burning and excruciating wounds ; all these things have been done, and *more*, by the ladies of Agra. I now conclude by proposing the ladies of Agra, and God bless them !

"Sergeant Hartigan then sat down amidst loud cheering ! the band playing God Save the Queen.

"Mr. Harvey the Commissioner of the Agra Division, rose to return thanks, and spoke nearly as follows:—

"I rise, deputed by the ladies whose health has just been drunk with such cordiality, to return thanks to the Heroes of H. M.'s 9th Lancers, for every man of them was a hero for this flattering acknowledgment of their services; the proudest Duchess in the land might well realize a prouder, because a holier, thrill of pleasureable satisfaction in attending to the wants of a wounded warrior than all the gaudy pleasures of social life could afford her. It was one of the characteristics of a true high-hearted soldier that he appreciated, in the highest phase of her nature—*Woman*:

"in her hours of ease, uncertain, coy and hard to please"—in some of her variable prettinesses we may have found her; but when care and sickness appealed to her sympathy, we all know what a ministering Angel she could cheerfully and gracefully become.

"The 9th Lancers, during a long career in India, had always won the applause, in peace or war, of all who had known them.

'In peace there nothing so becomes a man  
'As modest stillness and humility—Yet when  
'The blast of war sounds in their ears  
'They can be tigers in their fierce deportment.'

"And can feel, when war's tumults are over, grateful for the attentions of the '*ministering Angels*' whose kindness and care took off the edge from pain and sorrow, they knew what a dreary world this would be without—

"That cordial drop Heaven in our cup has thrown  
"To make the nauseous draught of life go down :"  
and the feeling address of Sergeant Hartigan must have found an echo in every breast.

"After some few further compliments to the Lancers, on a proposal to the company to 'pledge a measure the table round,' to their health, happiness and success, Mr. Harvey sat down amid the uproarious cheers of the company. After tiffin dancing was resumed, and the party broke up after a most delightful day. Our gallant hosts have indeed left themselves a reputation which will not speedily be effaced from the hearts of the fair Nightingales of Agra."

## TIM DONOVAN AND THE DOCTOR.

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### CHAPTER XXV.

SHOWING HOW TIM DONOVAN HAD HIS OWN PIPE PUT OUT, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME HE TOOK THE COAL OFF THE DOCTOR'S !

" You have been spinning what we used to call 'cuffers,' at a great rate lately," I said to my venerable friend, " with as much satisfaction to the public, I hope it may turn out, as it is evident it has been of interest to yourself. What with your 'Christmas Dinner,' your 'Victoria Cross'—your 'Moti Musjid' and 'such small deer' you have been furnishing 'acres of margin and rivers of type' for the behoof of the lieges ! "

" Arrah !" said the old fellow " I——"

" Stop !" I said to him solemnly. " Make no apology to me—for I'm used to it ! But me friend," I continued, " our space grows somewhat of the shortest, not to speak of the patience of what I hope will turn out to be our many thousand readers—and all things have an end, save a ring which is round and has no end, an' a puddin' which has two."

" Shakespeare !" ejaculated the old lancer.

"Very good," said I—"Shakespeare be it; but as the priest said to his partner when the game of whist at which he was engaged was apparently all against them—'niver mind, me deer, I've a trump here in the heel of my fist for them yet! I have 'one for your nob,' sir; as Rienzi was the last of the Tribunes, and as the most celebrated virago of modern or ancient times is invariably described as having had the last word, I am about to have *mine*!"

"Be all manes," said the lancer; wud ye?"—And here he pushed the decanter in my direction. But having become recently a convert to the doctrines of the great Matthewsonian Corkonian (and better, says Mr. Reade, late than never) I disowned the soft impeachment and held forth in "these languages."

"I will go back," said I, "to the days in which your Victoria Crosses were not; to the days when you were hammerin' away in the Punjab, while we were doing garrison duty at home. We were stationed in Ipswich—with a squadron at Norwich, and a detachment at Sandhurst, where some dozen or so of our fellows were waxing fat and making hatfulls of money, by teaching your future warriors and legislators the noble art of equitation. Well, sir, the medical officer in charge at head-quarters was a most inveterate enemy to the practice of tobacco-smoking in hospital. Of all the blasts against

tobacco ever blown—his were loud, long and continuous ; and backed by the medical regulations on the subject, and his own antipathies, his endeavours to put the practice down took the shape of a crusade, and more than one or two men, more determined or less wary than others, had come to grief in their pursuit, under difficulties, of the enjoyment of their favourite weed ! He had no objection to smoking in the open air ; but to smoke in the wards was rank heresy ! Now you know, as only a soldier can, how many old smokers are in a regiment ; and when you come to consider that the open air attached to the regimental hospital at Ipswich was of the most limited character, the barracks being surrounded on all sides by buildings of every description, and that the old hands and the young ones, too, for the matter of that, *must* smoke, the danger of being discovered enhanced the delight in a quiet “ pull ” on the sly—and as is usually the case when prevention (and coercion along with that) was brought into play—why, with all its attendant dangers, smoking in the hospital wards was at a premium !

It fell out, then, that one Tim Donovan, a slashing young dragoon from Blackpool—d’ye know it ?”

“ Eyah ! ” said the old fellow “ Cork’s own town and the blue sky over it ? ”

“ Right you are,” said I—“ was a patient in hospital. He was a most inveterate smoker, and not

having the fear of regulations either Queen's or medical before his eyes, one fine day in the summer of '46—aye '46—after having dined he went through the motions of charging his pipe with the greatest deliberation—he being *supposed* to be bedridden—lighted it, and was smoking away with all the *gout* which good tobacco and a venerable ould dudheen could bestow. Now the medical officer's visits, as a rule, were confined to two daily—morning and evening—but, of course, when what the men called 'a bad case' was under treatment, no one could say when 'Geordie' (the doctor's nickname) would make his appearance. Thus it happened that on this particular day, one of the cases abovementioned was being treated in hospital ; and as the doctor had a predilection, in addition to that of paying visits at "uncertain" hours, of not waiting for the hospital-sergeant or any orderly to attend him, about half past one o'clock the medico came to the hospital, walked up the narrow wooden staircase three steps at a time, and, quickly opening the ward door to the left on the first landing, was in the centre of the ward before any of its inmates knew he was there at all ! Tim Donovan was a sight to see ; in his hospital clothing, his head surmounted with the red night-cap conventional to such places, he sat cross-legged on his bed smoking the smoke of the just !

" *This—the most flagrant breach of hospital disci-*

pline he had ever seen, of course instantly attracted the surgeon's attention—and shouting loudly for the hospital-sergeant and the orderlies, he made a dash at Donovan—and said—

“ Give me that pipe !”

To him Donovan, as meek as a lamb, and with an expression of vacuity on his face never to be forgotten—made answer.

“ What pipe, sur ?”

“ The pipe,” said the surgeon “ you were smoking when I came into the ward.”

“ Is it me smoke, sur ?” said Donovan. “ Oh ! then, be this an ” be that, the sorra pipe has been in *my* mouth this six weeks !”

“ By this time the hospital-sergeant and the orderlies had made their appearance, and on hearing Donovan's declaration made with due solemnity, the surgeon made a gesture of despair, and pointed to the roof, where in spiral curls the smoke which had emanated from Tim Donovan's pipe was eddying gracefully. “ D'ye see that sergeant ?” almost shouted the surgeon. “ Why I saw the fellow smoking myself.” Then turning fiercely to his patient he said—“ give me that pipe, sir !”

“ Sure *I* have no pipe,” said Donovan.

“ Get up !” said the surgeon, and Tim got up—to be searched.

“ His person and bed were searched ; the persons

and the beds of the patients on either side were subjected to a similar process, but were fruitless of result, and the unfortunate pipe, the cause of all the *tumasha*, remained undiscovered.

"The surgeon presented the image of disappointment; the hospital-sergeant and the orderlies were at their wits-end, and Tim was smiling in a quiet, satiric way at having "bested" the lot of them.

"At length the surgeon, who apparently was determined to see the matter to an end, addressed Donovan.

"Donovan," said he, "you know how strict the orders are regarding smoking in hospital?"

Tim nodded.

"Well," continued the medico, "*if you tell me where you put that pipe*, I'll pledge you my word and honour as an officer and a gentleman, that I shall not report you to the commanding officer!"

"Tim considered for a brief space; he was turning over in his mind the chances of the doctor coaxing a confession out of him and then turning upon and rending him—

"Come," said the doctor, "do you hear?"

"I hear you, sur," said Tim. "I don't know," he slowly continued, "about your word an' honour as an officer an' a gentleman; but"—and here he shut one eye and looked knowingly at the surgeon—

*"av ye'll say upon yer sowl—I'll tell you where I put the pipe!"*

"The surgeon paused irresolute. He was a hard, old presbyterian of the covenanting type, and perhaps the proposed adjuration shocked his conscience, but at length, so eager was he to discover where the pipe had been relegated, he slowly ejaculated.

"Well—upon—my—soul!—there!"

"Well, sur," said Tim immensely relieved, but with a look of humour indescribable, "*the pipe is in your own pocket, an' if you don't look sharp it will burn a hole in the linin', for it was very hot when I pud it in!*"

"With a start, the surgeon thrust his hand into the pocket of his shooting coat—and there was the pipe sure enough—and all that Tim had prognosticated turned out to be correct, for the lining of the pocket of the surgeon's coat *had* taken fire, and so soon as he put his hand there, the lining—partially burnt—gave way and with a great crash Tim's cherished pipe fell at the doctor's feet—smashed into a thousand fragments!

"The matter was simply enough explained: when the surgeon made a dash at Tim, demanding his pipe—that astute gentleman quietly transferred the coveted article from *his* mouth to the doctor's pocket, and thore it lay *perdu* until it burnt its way out.

"When the *eclaircissement* took place, the expres-

sion of the surgeon's face was a study ! A withering glance of scorn at Tim ; a half-sheepish throwing up of the head at having been 'done' towards the hospital-sergeant, and then the *hakim* left the ward and the premises, without paying his projected visit to the bad case—and Tim Donovan was secure from the chance of punishment for smoking in hospital.







